

THE
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THE
DOUBLE DEALER

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AND
 EPIGRAMS

All contributions should be addressed to the Editors of *The Double Dealer*, 204
 Baronne Street, New Orleans, La.

THE DOUBLE DEALER PUBLISHING CO.,
 NEW ORLEANS, LA.

THE DOUBLE DEALER

“.....I can deceive them both by speaking the truth.”

In November 1693 Master William Congreve's comedy, “The Double Dealer,” made its debut before an assemblage of the beaux and belles of Restoration London, the beauty and wit of the court of William III. *January, 1921, The Double Dealer plays again.* On this occasion it takes the form of a monthly magazine, but its appeal once more is to that select audience for whom romance and irony lie not so many leagues apart; whose veneration for art, music, and letters, is not so solemn that it cannot be lightened by a sense of humor; whose opinions of society, economics, and politics are drawn, not from the perusal of dusty books, but rather from the vision of tolerant eyes estimating the devious ways of the world.

HONESTY AND THE DOUBLE DEALER

HONESTY is the best policy,” said Benjamin Franklin, the prototype of one hundred per cent. Americanism. But when Franklin wrote that he was making a confession, he was telling the truth about the citadels of power, a dangerous practice and one hardly in vogue since Machiavelli babbled in exile four hundred years ago.

Today these words are slyly changed into the motto, “*Honesty is our policy*,” which screams from every bazaar in the market-place. Each man now marches in the procession of the righteous wearing the monotonous mask of integrity. Yet they do not pass unrecognized. Ever and anon the mask slips for a minute and we glimpse strangely familiar faces, we seem to remember them about the Scaean Gates, on the plains

of Troy, “advancing true friends, and beating back alien foes,” bartering mercy for gold; in a crowded courtroom of Athens, intent on doing to death Socrates for being nobler than they, listening courteously to his plea with stopped ears; in an inner chamber of the Vatican trafficking in assassination and chicane with the Borgias. The play is interminable in its acts; and the persons of the drama are still the band of cut-purses, thimbleriggers, and their following, that men call The World—age old and ageless.

So, Honesty remains only the best policy. However, if the grapes of true honesty hang forever beyond our baffled reach, most of us, at least, work in the shadow of the vine. There is an elastic line which we indifferently toe. Hamlet called himself “indifferent honest”; nearly all could sing refrain. Certainly there are those whose delight it is to play hop-scotch with the line of demarkation, teasing more timid souls with a “now I'm outside, now I'm inside.” And those there are who range outside the margin altogether, the dare-devils of the world, who must draw danger with every breath and are necessarily mad when measured by the safety-first yard-stick. What awed us about Ponzi was not the dishonesty of the hoax but the man's brobdignagian brass.

But, heigh-ho, you say, what has all this to do with *The Double Dealer*, this unchanging depravity and this timorousness of human nature? Here is the answer. *The Double Dealer* is concerned with this human nature, the raw stuff, cleared of the myths of glamor-throwers and Utopia-weavers, casting off the

spell of "all the drowsy syrups of the world." We mean to deal double, to show the other side, to throw open the back windows stuck in their sills from disuse, smuttred over long since against even a dim beam's penetration. To myopics we desire to indicate the hills, to visionaries the unwashed dishes; we will figure to you the pathos of a fop in an orphan asylum, the absurdity of an unselfish reformer. We expect to be called Radical by Tory and Reactionary by Red. But we remain only ourselves who can "deceive them both by speaking the truth," and, as the honestest soul amongst you, we ask you in the mysteries of your subterranean retorts to drain a beaker of the forbidden juice of the fruit to—THE DOUBLE DEALER.

AXES ON EDGE

WHEN *The Double Dealer* was in the embryo, a handful of people who were impressed by the sincerity of the project, expressed a little abhorrence at the name. Coming from such upstanding members of society as we, and topping a sheet to be read by such intelligent people as they, it was not at all nice; it suggested horrible things like scandal, blackmail, and "radical propaganda." Plainly, they were mistaken. The apparitions they had conjured up do not rattle their bones, in the first issue, at least. We did not, however, share their anxiety; we are still *The Double Dealer*, and with all deference to the kind individuals who helped us forward, utterly out of sympathy with the rule book.

Like any artistic venture, *The Double Dealer* is the conception of a few men who share the same prejudices as well as the same tolerance. You need not expect to find in these pages, sympathy for presto change reforms,

nor for syndicates for the propagation of brotherly love. You will be squandering your patience to look for gladness—Pollyanna style—or the muddled sentimentality born of an increasing purse and an uncreasing cerebrum; it will avail you not at all to search for an unground ax, a moral purpose, a political affiliation.

But inversely, if you can agree with Schopenhauer that when man was made, the Creator did not use both hands; scoff with Voltaire at the idea of this best of all possible worlds; touch hands with Mark Twain in his aphorism as to a sense of humor being man's only adequate weapon; if you are envious of Cabell who can indulge in illusions and then shrug them off; if you nod your head with the old preacher of Ecclesiastes but see no necessity to get excited about it—*The Double Dealer* is for you—and you are for it.

It is fitting that for the initial number, we should be able to include the name of Lafcadio Hearn. New Orleans is one of the cities that claims as her own, this strangely cosmopolitan man stemming from Ireland and Greece, tarrying with us a while before plunging into the Orient never to return. "*Night Born*," fascinated by whatever was archaic and exotic, by what Nietzsche terms, '*the pathos of distance*,' he clung to his chimeras and fancies as the real-est things in an evaporating world of vaunted reality. Almost ignored during his sojourn here and scorned by literary clubs and recalcitrant professors, he stands today with Pater and Lamb in the sanctuary of those who love the art of flawless craftsmanship for its own sake. It is with some self-preening that we point to "*The Last of the New Orleans Fencing Masters*" in this issue.

There was a time when the fame of New Orleans was based for the most part on gin-fizzes and brothels. Now that the all-wise legislators have thrown these things on the ash-heap, there is, happily, something else which appears to be placing us apart from those drab cities of soda-fountains and Sunday laws. We refer to the spirit that is now supporting the concerts, the lectures, the art associations, the Bridle-goose Club, Le Petit Theatre, and in the Quarter, the various clubs and coteries whose apparent purpose it is to nourish the traditions of the old ground. To be sure, we are not spellbound with the illusion that such things usually carry; we know well that part of the artistic audiences are but figures in the social world, and a great many of the dilettantes who grace the studio firesides mere tea drinkers of a virulent type; but, let drone and bumble bee hum, so that there be within the hive a scantling of honey.

Our plan for the present is to print one short story each month, essays, reviews, sketches, epigrams and sundry observations on the human animal as celestial aspirant and strap-hanger. Such writers as Mr. Benjamin De Casseres, who allows himself to be styled a romantic pessimist, can give you both. He says of his "Psychometric Reporter," the first part of which appears in this issue: "This is not romantic pessimism, but romantic humbug which is better still." Later we hope to show Mr. De Casseres in other moods and let our readers say which they prefer.

In these sheets will be bundled strange bedfellows—grand names which may be 'writ in water,' unknowns who may be chiselling their mark in adamant. In this selection, we do not pretend to the discrimination of time.

Within our limited judgement, we shall present the best material we can muster.

In verse our concern will not be with the skeleton, the form, but the marrow within. Consequently we shall tilt no crazy lance for free verse, or *vers libre*, as its excited champions prefer to term it. We shall print it if it be well written together with the rhymed sonnet, rondeau, ballade, and villanelle.

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*"...I CAN DECEIVE THEM BOTH
BY SPEAKING THE TRUTH."*

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A Word from James Branch Cabell

NOVEMBER

30

1920

Editors of The Double Dealer.

Gentlemen:

Your program, as announced, is ambitious and mellifluous and generally attractive, with perhaps the minor fault of being a trifle beyond the scope of human ability. But that, as touches literary endeavor anyhow, is errancy on the right side.

I do not know how any personal benevolence toward an as yet unpublished magazine can well be voiced save with a formal wish for all imaginable success well merited; this much, however, one may desire for you most heartily. From actual criticism the unborn share with the dead in exemption (although because of, to be sure, more cheery and less immutable reasons), so that, in either case, the bystander's rôle can only be that of tacit hopefulness. The Double Dealer, after all, is committed to sink or swim by virtue of its own inherent virtues. Such was metaphor of the prologue to your Congrevean namesake, you will remember, nor can I imagine any more true and tonic avowal as herald for the second Double Dealer's outset.

Therefore I wish you all the luck you may deserve, in friendly confidence that your merits may thus add up to some quite unexampled prosperity.

Yours faithfully,

JAMES BRANCH CABELL.

Dumbarton Grange,

Dumbarton, Virginia.

MR. CABELL OF VIRGINIA

WE do not think that Mr. James Branch Cabell of Dumbarton Grange, Dumbarton, Virginia, needs any introduction to the country at large, despite the belated and crotchety presentation of a Mr. Gunther in the

November *Bookman*, but we do think that our friends hereabout are as yet unaware of his topping presence in the field of American letters.

Mr. Cabell's art is, at once, so individual and various that we, for our part, should be diffident about either appreciating or criticising it. The

afore-mentioned Mr. Gunther however, after saying that "he (Cabell) manifestly has limitations, his style being frequently annoying, often verbose, his vocabulary *impossible*, concludes by stating that "Cabell is a stylist of distinction, a painter of beautiful images, a suave, a subtle ironist. We have a juggler of ideas, a nimble wit, a skeptical and tolerant philosopher. We have a queer, tricksy, and deft craftsman who tells his story well." And he winds up by calling him "the most interesting figure in American letters." Mr. Walpole in the *Yale Review*, Messrs. Rascoe, Hergesheimer, Benjamin de Casseres and H. L. Mencken, have all, with more or less excellent discrimination appraised Mr. Cabell's craftsmanship. Nevertheless, we believe that no present appraisal can be made of a man who is not writing either for or about the present. His material is from all time and his art for all time. Fifty years hence some longheaded, spectacled gentleman may be positioned for a fitting estimate of the Cabell phenomenon in the early twentieth century. In the meanwhile let us make ourselves merry with the enjoyment of his books.

As this is scrivened merely for the purpose of stimulating a keener interest in the Cabellian product we shall begin by suggesting that you first read "The Cream of the Jest" partly because it contains some of the author's finest writing, verve, feeling, and the seed of his latter style; and partly because it is more easily obtained at present having been reissued recently. Next we would commend the perusal of "Gallantry" (Harper's 1907). Mr. Cabell, we understand, is revising the book. The romance and delicate irony of "Gallantry" to one reader at least is exquisite. Then, perhaps, "The Certain Hour," a series of striking episodes in the lives of divers

poets. Either "The Rivet in Grandfather's Neck" or "The Soul of Melicent (revised under the title "Domnei") might follow. And, then, "Beyond Life!" And then "Jurgen!"

If you can wade through the sands and shallows of the very early books, such as "The Eagle's Shadow" and "The Line of Love" out into the white-capped ocean of "Beyond Life" and "Jurgen" and manage, somehow, to swim, float, or fly with the author, your efforts will not be entirely unrewarded. The ocean of life and beyond life—romance, legend, illusion, irony—the medley of gust and love and laughter and tears, with a fine courage back of it all facing inevitable defeat at the last—a sad yet buoyant hopefulness whistling a droll second to the obligato of the Gods!

We quote from "Beyond Life:"—"For thus to spin romances is to bring about, in every sense, man's recreation, since man alone of animals can, actually, acquire a trait by assuming, in defiance of reason, that he already possesses it. To spin romances is, indeed, man's proper and peculiar function in a world wherein he only of created beings can make no profitable use of the truth about himself. For man alone of animals plays the ape to his dreams. So he fares onward chivalrously, led by *ignes fatui* no doubt, yet moving onward. And that the goal remains ambiguous seems but a trivial circumstance to any living creature who knows, he knows not how, that to stay still can be esteemed only a virtue in the dead."

Continuing we read: "Indeed, when I consider the race to which I have the honor to belong, I am filled with respectful wonder. All about us flows and gyrates unceasingly the material universe,—an endless inconceivable jumble of rotatory blazing gas and

frozen spheres and detonating comets, wherethrough spins Earth like a frail midge. And to this blown molecule adhere what millions and millions and millions of parasites just such as I am, begetting and dreaming and slaying and abnegating and toiling and making mirth, just as did aforetime those countless generations of our forebears, everyone of whom was likewise a creature just such as I am! * * *

"Nor is this everything. For my reason, such as it is, perceives this race in its entirety, in the whole outcome of its achievement, to be beyond all wording petty and ineffectual! and no more than thought can estimate the relative proportion to the material universe of our poor Earth, can thought conceive with what quintillionths to express that fractional part which I, as an individual parasite, add to Earth's negligible fretting by ephemerae."

"And still—behold the miracle!—still I believe life to be a personal transaction between myself and Omnipotence; I believe that what I do is somehow of importance; and I believe that I am on a journey toward some very public triumph not unlike that of the third prince in the fairytale."

Here are but two passages, perhaps ill-chosen ones, from a book abounding in quotable matter. In "Jurgen" the wealth of wit and well-turned phrasing make it a difficult task to select an apt paragraph. Space is limited, and one must take the pains and the accompanying pleasure to read an author of the Cabell stamp, however in concluding we glean you a bit from this remarkable book. Here is Jurgen confronted by the brown man with the queer feet, the symbol of All, who states indifferently that he may choose to annihilate him.

Says Jurgen: "None the less, I think there is something in me which will en-

dure. I am fettered by cowardice, I am enfeebled by disastrous memories; and I am maimed by old follies. Still, I seem to detect in myself something which is permanent and rather fine. Underneath everything, and in spite of everything, I really do seem to detect that something. What role that something is to enact after the death of my body, and upon what stage, I cannot guess. When fortune knocks I shall open the door. Meanwhile, I tell you candidly, you brown man, there is something in Jurgen far too admirable for any intelligent arbiter ever to fling into the dustheap. I am, if nothing else, a monstrous clever fellow; and I think I shall endure somehow. Yes, cap in hand goes through the land, as the saying is: and I believe I can contrive some trick to cheat oblivion when the need rises, says Jurgen, trembling, and gulping, and with his eyes shut tight, but even so, with his mind quite made up about it. Of course you may be right; and certainly I cannot go so far as to say you are wrong: but still at the same time"—

"Now but before a fool's opinion of himself, the brown man cried the Gods are powerless. Oh, yes, and envious, too!"

"Tis gallant sparkling Greek wine,
now for God's sake, sweetheart, do but
teach me how the devil you make it.—
Rabelais.

THE SMILE

I sought a meaning
For your smile
As of Leonardo's Lady.

Could it have meant
I was a fool?

LOUIS GILMORE

The Last of the New Orleans Fencing Masters

Note—An unique chapter in the romantic history of New Orleans was contributed by Lafcadio Hearn some thirty-five years ago to the *Southern Bivouac* of Louisville, soon after defunct, which we here reprint.

This item, for some reason, has escaped the eyes of the several editors who have industrially dug out from various periodicals and journals, vagrant matter of this now highly appreciated littérateur. No collected volume, so far as we know, of the many posthumous publications contains this very interesting example of Lafcadio Hearn done in his best style.

The character of Llulla, fifty years ago, was a well-known celebrity of the Vieux Carré and in his old age ran a cemetery on Louisa Street, where he held court in the matters of the *code duello* dispensing service before or after as required.

I.

SENOR Don José Llulla, or Pepe Llulla, as he is more affectionately styled by his admirers, is a person whose name has become legendary even in his life-time. While comparatively few are intimate with him, for he is a reserved man, there is scarcely a citizen who does not know him by name, and hardly a New Orleans urchin who could not tell you that "Pepe Llulla is a great duelist who has a cemetery of his own." Although strictly true, this information is apt to create a false impression of some connection between Pepe's duels, and Pepe's necropolis; the fact being that none of his enemies repose in the Louisa-street cemetery, which he owns, and that he has never killed enough men to fill a solitary vault. There is, in short, no relationship between the present and the past occupations of the cemetery proprietor; but before speaking of the former, I may attempt to give a brief outline of the

career of this really extraordinary character who won his way to fortune and to fame by rare energy and intrepidity.

Pepe was born near Port Mahon, capital of Minorca, one of those Balea-ric Islands whose inhabitants were celebrated in antiquity for their skill in the use of missile-weapons, and have passed under so many dominations—Carthaginian, Roman, Vandal, Moorish, Spanish, French, and English. His own uncommon dexterity in the use of arms, however, does not appear due to any physical inheritance from ancient Ba-lea-ric forefathers, as he traces back his family to a Moorish origin. This asser-tion, in view of Pepe's chestnut hair and bluish-gray eyes, would seem untenable unless we reflect that those desert horsemen who first invaded Spain in the cause of Islam were mostly Berbers, kindred of the strange nomads who still preserve their fair skins and blue eyes under the sun of the Sahara—the "Veiled People," who are known afar off by their walk, "long and measured, like the stride of the ostrich." I can not say that Pepe is really a Berber; but he possesses physical characteris-tics which harmonize well with the de-scriptions in Henri Duveyrier's "Les Toureg du Nord"; and Southern Louisiana is full of surprises for the ethnog-rapher. The photograph, which obtained so much celebrity, was taken more than fifteen years ago, and Pepe has but slightly changed since then. He is only a little grayer, and remains very erect, agile, and elastic in his movements; a man about the average height, rather vigorously than powerfully built. He attributes his excellent physical preser-

vation to his lifelong abstinence. No liquor ever passed his lips, and his nerves still retain the steadiness of youth.

Pepe's imagination was greatly impressed during early boyhood by the recitals of sailors who used to visit his father's home at Port Mahon; and his passion for the sea became so strong as he grew older that it required constant vigilance to keep him from joining some ship's crew by stealth. Finally, when an American captain—John Conkling, of Baltimore, I believe—made known in Port Mahon that he wanted an intelligent Spanish lad on his vessel, Pepe's parents deemed it best to allow their son to ship as cabin-boy. He remained several years with the captain, who became attached to him, and attempted to send him to a school to study navigation, in the hope of making a fine sailor of him. But the boy found himself unable to endure the constraints of study; ran away and shipped as a common seaman. He went with whalers to the antarctic zone, and with slavers to the West African coast, and after voyaging in all parts of the world, entered the service of some merchant company whose vessels plied between New Orleans and Havana. At last he resolved to abandon the sea, and to settle in New Orleans in the employ of a Spaniard named Biosca, proprietor of a ballroom and café. Being a very sinewy, determined youth, Pepe was intrusted with the hazardous duty of maintaining order; and, after a few unpleasant little experiences, the disorderly element of the time recognized they had found a master, and the peace of Biosca's establishment ceased to be disturbed.

Pepe soon began to visit the popular fencing-schools of New Orleans. He was already a consummate master in

the use of the knife (what thoroughbred Spaniard is not?) but he soon astonished the best *Tireurs* by his skill with the foils.

At that time fencing was a fashionable amusement. It was the pride of a Creole gentleman to be known as a fine swordsman. Most of the Creole youths educated in Paris have learned the art under great masters; but even these desired to maintain their skill by frequent visits to the Salles d'Armes at home. Indeed, fencing was something more than a mere amusement; it was almost a necessity. In New Orleans, as Paris, the passions of society were regulated if not restrained by the duel; and the sword was considered the proper weapon with which gentlemen should settle certain disputes. But the custom of dueling prevailed in New Orleans to an extent unparalleled in France since the period of the Revolution. Creole society in Louisiana was an aristocratic and feudal organization based upon slavery. Planters and merchants lived and reigned like princes; the habit of command and the pride of power developed characters of singular inflexibility; passions, tropicalized under this strong sun of ours, assumed a violence unknown in calmer France and the influences of combined wealth and leisure aided to ferment them. Three or four duels a day were common; this number was often exceeded; and the young men seemed anxious to fight for the mere ferocious pleasure of fighting. A friend tells me this queer reminiscence of the old *régime*: "A party of young Creoles, slightly flushed with wine, are returning from an evening entertainment. The night is luminous and warm; the air perfumed with breath of magnolias; the sward is smooth, level, springy as an English turf. Suddenly one of the party stops, feels the sod with his

foot, and, leaping nearly to his own height, vociferates, '*quel lieu pour se battre!*' (What a place for a fight!) His enthusiasm proves contagious; a comrade proposes that the party shall take all possible advantage of the situation. Sword-play begins, at first jestingly; then some fencer loses his temper, and the contest all at once becomes terribly earnest, to end only with the death of several participants."

The demand for fencing-masters was amply supplied by foreigners and also by some local experts, *Maitres d'Armes* whose names are now remembered only by a very few venerable citizens. The most celebrated were L'Alouette, an Alsatian; Montiasse, also an Alsatian and Napoleonic veteran; Cazeres, of Bordeaux; Baudoin, of Paris; the two brothers Rosiere, of Marseilles; Dauphin, a famous expert (killed at last in a shot-gun duel which he had recklessly provoked). Behind these fading figures of the past, three darker ghosts appear: Black Austin, a free negro, who taught the small-sword; Robert Severin a fine mulatto, afterward killed in Mexico, and Basile Croquere (I am not sure that I spell the name correctly), also a mulatto, and the most remarkable colored swordsman of Louisiana. Those of my readers who have not seen Vigeant's beautiful little book, "*Un Maitre d'Armes Sous la Restoration*," may perhaps be surprised to learn that the founder of the modern French school of swordsmanship, and the greatest swordsman of this century, was a mulatto of San Domingo, that famous Jean Louis, who in one terrible succession of duels, occupying only forty minutes, killed or disabled thirteen master-fencers of that Italian army pressed into service by Napoleon for his Peninsular campaign.

II.

It was under L'Alouette that Pepe principally studied; and the fencing-master, finding after a time that his pupil excelled him, appointed him his *prevôt* or assistant. In a succession of subsequent encounters the young man proved that, though he might have one or two rivals with the foils, he had no real superior among the *Maitres d'Armes*. Then he began to study the use of other varieties of weapons; the saber, with which he became the most expert perhaps in the South; the Broad-sword with which he afterward worsted more than one accomplished English teacher. With the foil, which is only a training weapon and allows of a closer play, fine fencers have been able to make some good points with him but with the rapier or small sword he was almost invulnerable. With fire-arms his skill was not less remarkable. Pepe's friends were accustomed to hold a dollar in their fingers or a pipe between their teeth for him to shoot at. Twenty years ago he would often balance an egg on the head of his little son, and invariably break the shell with a Colt-ball at the distance of thirty paces; with a rifle he seldom failed to hit any small object tossed in the air, such as a ball, a cork, or a coin.

L'Alouette and his pupil became very warm friends; their intimacy was only once chilled by an unfortunate accident. At a time when the bowie-knife was still a novel arm in New Orleans, L'Alouette insisted upon a public contest with Llulla, the weapons to be wooden bowies with hickory blades. Pepe had no equal, however, in the use of a knife of any sort; and L'Alouette, finding himself repeatedly touched and never able to make a point, lost his temper and made a violent assault on

the young Spaniard, who, parrying the thrust countered so heavily that the fencing-master was flung senseless to the floor with two ribs fractured. But the friendship of the two men was renewed before long, and continued until L'Alouette's death several years later. Llulla, in whose arms he died, succeeded his teacher, not only of fencing, but also of the use of fire-arms. He did not, indeed teach the knife, but he has often given surprising proofs of his skill with it. A gentleman who is quite expert with most weapons, told me that after having succeeded in persuading Pepe to have a sham contest with him only a few years ago, he received the point of Pepe's mock weapon directly in the hollow of his throat almost at the very first pass, and was repeatedly struck in the same place during five or six vain efforts to make a point. None of the serious contests in which Pepe has engaged lasted more than a few moments; he generally disabled his adversary at the very outset of the encounter.

Although remunerative in those days, the profession of fencing-master did not suit Llulla's energetic character. He kept his *Salle d'Armes*, but hired assistants, and only devoted so much of his own time to teaching as could be spared from more practical duties. He had already laid down the foundation of his fortune, had brought out from Minorca his mother and brother, had married, and commenced to do business on his own account. Few men have attempted as many different things as he has with equal success. He built slaughter-houses and speculated in cattle; he bought up whole fleets of flatboats and sold the material for building purposes (working all day up to his waist in water, and never getting sick in consequence); he bought land on the other side of the river and built cottages upon

it; he built a regular Spanish bull-ring and introduced bull fights; he bought a sawmill and made it pay, and finally purchased the Louisa-street cemeteries, after accumulating a capital of probably several hundred thousand dollars. During the war he remained faithful to the Union, declaring that he could not violate his oath of allegiance to the United States. After the war he bought the island of Grande Terre, in the Gulf (excepting, of course, the government reservation on which Fort Livingston and the Barataria Light-house are situated) a wild, wind-swept place, to which cattle from neighboring islands sometimes swim in spite of the sharks. In summer it is a fine pleasure resort for sea-bathers, and Pepe could never wholly separate himself from the sea.

During all those years Pepe kept his fencing school, but rather as a recreation than as a money-making establishment. He is now the last of the old fencing-masters, and although he has practically retired from public life will not refuse to instruct (*gratis*) pupils introduced to him by personal friends. For nearly half a century he was the confidant and trainer of New Orleans duelists, and figured as second in more than a hundred encounters. The *duello* is now almost obsolete in the South; and Creole New Orleans is yielding in this respect to the influences of Americanization. It is fully three years since Pepe's services were last called into requisition.

While his formidable reputation as an expert often secured him against difficulties and dangers to which another in his position would have been exposed, it did not save him from the necessity of having some twenty or more affairs of his own. In half a score of these affairs his antagonists weakened at the last moment, either apolo-

gizing on the field or failing to appear at all, and only after having attempted to take every advantage attached to their privilege of the choice of weapons. One individual proposed to fight with poinards in a dark room; another with knives inside a sugar hogshead; another wanted a duel with Colt revolvers, each of the principals to hold one end of the same pocket-handkerchief; another proposed that lots should be drawn for two pistols—one empty and the other loaded; and a Cuban, believing no such weapons procurable in New Orleans, proposed to fight with *machetes*; but, to the horror of the man, Pepe forthwith produced two *machetes*, and proposed to settle the difficulty then and there, a proposal which resulted in the Cuban's sudden disappearance. Only once was Pepe partly thwarted by a proposition of this sort, when some Havana filibuster proposed that both principals and witnesses should "fight with poisoned pills," lots to be drawn for the pills. Pepe was willing, but the seconds declared they would not take the pills or permit them to be taken. Several of Llulla's duels were undertaken in behalf of friends, while he was actually acting in the role of a second only, and when one of the principals could not fulfill the duties of the moment. On a certain occasion the second of the opposite side, who was a German fencing-master, declared his principal in no condition to fight, and volunteered to take his place. "We accept," replied Llulla instantly, "but in that case you shall deal, not with my principal but with me!" Ten seconds later the German lay on the ground with a severely gashed arm and both lungs transpierced. It was seldom, however, that Pepe cared to wound an antagonist so severely; and although he has had duels or difficulties with men of most Euro-

pean nationalities, only two men died at his hands, after having placed him under the necessity of killing or of being killed. In none of his duels, even at the time when the duel regulated society, was he actuated by other motives than friendship or pride; and the only gift he would ever accept from the man whose part he assumed, was a weapon of some sort. But his admirers have treated him so well in this respect that he now possesses a perfect arsenal, including all kinds, not only of swords but of rifles, pistols, revolvers, poniards, cutlasses, etc., which forms quite a curiosity in itself. Since the war Pepe has had no personal difficulties except those assumed in the cause of Spanish patriotism; but these affairs first made him really famous, and form the most interesting incidents of his singular career.

III.

After having long been the headquarters of the Cuban filibusters, New Orleans was violently convulsed in 1853, by the fate of the Lopez expedition, and serious outbreaks occurred, for the results of which the Spanish government subsequently demanded and obtained satisfaction from the United States. It was Pepe Llulla who at that time saved the Spanish Consul's life, by getting him out of the city safely to the plantation of a compatriot. Pepe's own life was then menaced; and though none ventured to attack him in broad daylight, his determination and courage alone saved him from several night-attempts at assassination. After the Lopez riots the anti-Spanish fury died down to be revived again in 1869 by another Cuban tragedy. But in 1869 the United States garrison was strong, and there was no serious rioting. The rage of the Cuban revolutionaries vented itself only in

placards, in sanguinary speeches, in cries of *death to Spain!* and in a few very petty outrages upon defenseless Spaniards. Pepe Llulla challenged one of the authors of the outrages, who, failing to accept, was placarded publicly as a coward.

Then he resolved to take up the cause of Spain in his own person, and covered the city with posters in English, in French, and in Spanish, challenging all Cuban revolutionaries, either in the West Indies or the United States. This challenge was at first accepted by a number, but seemingly by men who did not know the character of Llulla, for these Cuban champions failed to come to time, a few declaring they respected Pepe too much to fight him; yet at the same time a number of efforts were made to assassinate him—some by men who seemed to cross the Gulf for no other purpose. Fortunately for himself Pepe has always proved an uncommonly hard man to kill; moreover, he had become so accustomed to this sort of danger that it was almost impossible to catch him off his guard. Even gangs bold enough to enter his house or place of business had been terribly handled; and a party of seven drunken soldiers who once attempted to wreck his establishment left five of their number *hors de combat*, felled by an iron bar. Again, a Mexican, who had hidden behind a door to attack Llulla with a knife, had his weapon wrested from him and was severely beaten for his pains. The Cuban emissaries and others fared no better in 1860. Two men, who concealed themselves in the cemetery at dusk, were unexpectedly confronted with Pepe's pistols, and ordered to run for their lives, which they proceeded to do most expeditiously, leaping over tombs and climbing over walls in their panic. Another party of ruffians met the

Spaniard at his own door in the middle of the night, and were ingloriously routed. Once more, hearing that a crowd of rowdies were collecting in the neighborhood after dark with the intention of proceeding to his house, Llulla went out and attacked them single-handed, scattering them in all directions.

At last the Cubans found a champion to oppose the redoubtable Pepe, an Austrian ex-officer, who had entered the Cuban revolutionary service, a soldier of fortune, but a decidedly brave and resolute man. He was a good swordsman, but considering the formidable reputation of his antagonist, chose the pistol as a weapon more likely to equalize the disparity between the two men. The conditions were thirty paces, to advance and fire at will. When the word of command was given, the Spaniard remained motionless as a statue, his face turned away from his antagonist; while the Austrian, reserving his fire, advanced upon him with measured strides. When within a short distance of Llulla he raised his arm to fire, and at that instant the Spaniard, wheeling suddenly, shot him through both lungs. The Austrian was picked up, still breathing, and lingered some months before he died. His fate probably deterred others from following his example, as the Cubans found no second champion.

The spectacle of a solitary man thus defying the whole Cuban revolution, bidding all enemies of Spain to fight or hold their peace, evoked ardent enthusiasm both among the loyalists of Cuba and the Spaniards of New Orleans. Pepe soon found himself surrounded by strong sympathizers ready to champion the same cause; and telegrams began to pour in from Spaniards in Cuba and elsewhere, letters of congratula-

tion also, and salutations from grantees. There is something particularly graceful and sympathetic in Spanish praise; and in reading those now faded missives, hung up in pretty frames upon the walls of Pepe's dwelling, I could not help feeling myself some of the generous enthusiasm that breathed in them: "*Felicitamos cordialmente y afectuosamente al pondonoroso y valiente Señor Llulla; ofriciendole, si necesario fuere, nuestras vidas*" (*voluntarios de artilleria*)..... "*Los voluntarios de Cárdenas admirán y abrazan al valiente Señor Llulla*" (*el commandante la casa*) ... "*Felicitamos al Señor Llulla por su noble, generosa, y patriótica conducta, ofreciéndole nuestra cooperación en todos tiempos y lugares.*"

Such telegrams came fluttering in daily like Havanese butterflies, and solicitations for Pepe's photograph were made and acceded to, and pictures of him were sold by thousands in the streets of the great West Indian City. Meanwhile the Cubans held their peace, as bidden. And then came from Madrid a letter of affectionate praise, sealed with the royal seal, and signed with the regent's name, Don Francisco Serrano y Dominguez, el Regente del Reino, and with this letter the Golden

Cross of the Order of Carlos III (Carlos Tercero), and a document conferring knighthood, *libre de castos*, upon the valiant son who had fought so well for Spain in far-away Louisiana.

But I have yet to mention the most exquisite honor of all. Trust a Spanish heart to devise a worthy reward for what it loves and admires! From Havana came one day a dainty portrait of Pepe Llulla worked seemingly in silk, and surrounded by what appeared to be a wreath of laurels in the same black silk, and underneath, in black letters upon a gold ground, the following honorific inscription: "*A Don José Llulla, decidio sostenedor de la honra nacional entre los traidores de New Orleans.*" But that woven black silk was the silk of woman's hair, the lustrous hair of Spanish ladies who had cut off their tresses to wreath his portrait with! It hangs in the old man's parlor near the portrait of his dead son, the handsome boy who graduated at West Point with honors, and when I beheld it and understood it, the delicious grace of that gift touched me like the discovery of some new and unsuspected beauty in human nature.

LAFCADIO HEARN

Man and woman were created to dwell together—from time to time.

THE RAG PICKER

A man sat upon a rock and pulled his life to pieces. The good of it he put in one pile and the bad in another, and the pile of the bad was the larger and he wept. "Fool," said a pilgrim who passed, "thinnest thou the gods care if thy garment be woven of white threads or of scarlet, if it prove but strong and keepeth the wind from thy heart?"

OLIVE BOULLEMET.

Revel

Saint Aristippus and Saint Laughing Tom,
Prithee now come,
Bring with ye gizzards of the Laughing Goose
And bring the juice
Of monkeys, penguins and vain cockatoos.
We shall incant a spell
As solemn as all hell.

Saint Rabelais, ay, and saintly Anatole,
I pray ye all,
Saints Dekker, Butler, and Democritus
All-glorious,
Come with the feathers of the popinjay
And goose-down grey
And gentle dilberries gathered by the way.
Come now and grace this revel
As solemn as the devil.

For we shall chant hereby an incantation
In honor of creation:
With reverent step and upward-rolling eye
We shall give praise most high
To God and Man and their great Destination.
High-stepping round the cauldron we shall call
The Sprites Primordial
Out from the womb of darkness and no-time
To join us in a rhyme
In honor of them all:
To join us in a toast
To God and Man and the Great Holy Ghost.

Sure, one and all,
Those Sprites Primordial
Will drink their bumpers in this holy revel
As solemn as the devil,
For we shall give them wine
Finer than superfine,
Brewed in our cauldrons to a chanted spell
As solemn as all hell,
Made rich with gizzards of the Laughing Goose
And monkey-juice.

JOHN MCCLURE

Business a la Mode

I HAVE given a hostage to Fortune, and am on my way to "success."

Barring unreasonable disaster, it is not likely that I shall ever again go penniless. I shall fall short of the capitalist's swollen splendor, but good jobs of one kind and another will be mine until I am senile.

Naturally my viewpoint will change; the brain will grow obese concerning the athletics of so-called failure, those intellectual leaps and sprints, joyous or desperate, and the long cross-country grind, customary to the playboy spurred by visions of beauty and nightmares of the jail-hospital. My sense of proportion will come to lean as heavily to the west as it now veers widely to the east. The Doxology will then seem of more serious import than an organ-grinder's tone on the first Spring day, and the outline of Mimi's transparent-fingered hand, against the light, less impressive than the portly figure of old Sen. Leatherweasand, shouting flubdub from the rostrum, over a thumb-stained glass of water.

I shall say to myself: "After all, there is a deal of satisfaction in being well-walleted," and to the gay stripplings: "Have a care lest you linger too long, a-sowing the wild barley."

Those pursy, profitable days, and platinous evenings! May the Elder Gods of sea and mountains—yea, the Pan who pipes an air as magical through city streets as in Boetian fields—be kind and not desert me utterly in my plutocratic need.

It is possible that I can perform a service by recording, fresh, the impressions of failure.

The American business stories which I have read might appropriately be en-

titled: "How Granther Got His Million, by Granther, after Getting." Granther invariably appears on the frontispiece in sepia, either ultra-nattily with a Chesterfield in hand and another behind the ear, or as an imitation of an old woodcut, in a one-inch collar and a flat tie the size of my fist.

Our neurotic system of business affects many of us like an apple-corer, removing core and seeds, and leaving a wholesome but characterless pulp. Thus Granther, reminiscing of the vital years, is unable to remember how he felt. One would suppose, to read him, that he never cursed his boss, behind the latter's back, with full-mouthed oaths, for a slave-driver, or threw away a job to save a friend, or used a woman's influence to steal a better one.

It is the lack of Business' human side that I deplore in these worthy articles. I see Granther sanding the sugar as the grocer's clerk, but he is an octogenarian, toothless and bewigged, mumbling moral axioms over the barrel, and not the cheerful boy, who in reality grinned cynically at the deception. Of course it became necessary for him, in order to reach his pinnacle, to omit all spontaneous feelings except avarice, yet never tell me that the pruning was not done gradually, with halts and heartaches.

The gradual dehumanization of the B.M., during the process of success, is chiefly responsible, one guesses, for the artificiality of our business system—for the sassy switchboard gels and telephonic disarray; the silly glass coops and owl-eyed sekretaries; the whole mass of humbug, courtesy and inefficiency encountered by ordinary wanderers in the maze of commerce as she is perpetrated throughout this Land of

the Free. Granther resembles the ostrich, which thrusts its head into the sand and imagines its tail feathers hidden, until some brutal sceptic, who doesn't play the game according to the rules, plucks them away.

Happily for Granther, the rules are generally observed. In fact it is so easy to grow fat by following them, with tongue in cheek, that to break them is foolish.

Take, for example, the process of getting a job, in the "upper hound" stratum, where the current remuneration may range from thirty-five to a hundred and fifty units per week, thus covering a majority of the supposedly intelligent citizens who are under patriotic obligation to register and vote, but who do not.

There are two standard ways of obtaining such a job: through influence, and by pavement-pounding. The first is arbitrary, an unexciting method, outside the province of the present commentator, who has had no noble sponsors. The second includes the agency (thumbs down!), the advertisement, and the circular letter, leading to the siege-interview.

To detail here the preliminary steps, were wasted time. The matter of recommendations is also inferior, since persons of slight originality collect them naturally, and those of talent can invent them.

Proceed we to the interview-by-siege.

The essential thing beyond all others, when the great man has signified that he may be seen, is to adopt a buoyancy. There is as yet no guarantee, or even a probability, that the interview will really take place; most great Americans, and especially those designated to handle employment for their firms, make appointments of this kind in a helter-skelter fashion—Texas leaguers

scooped into right field by the second stenographer, an indifferent batswoman. The applicant may not find his man in the building at all at the specified hour, and certainly will be halted at every station. Therefore he should start with his good-nature at double-plus.

I loathe particularly, as the liberty cap on the flagpole of inefficiency, the hole surrounded by ground glass, through which the visitor to the reception parlor of many of our best business houses peers down upon the hostile nape of Tessy Tappertoes. For such cases, I have but one counsel: break the glass unhesitatingly, and stun Tessy with a single blow. Only so can good-nature, however fortified, be held.

More hopeful is the situation commanded by Queenie with That Dark Red Hair, even though Queenie has obviously defeated a line of sad-eyed adventurers waiting flaccidly upon the mourners' bench.

Be brave, be jaunty; but do not jig too much! A bright-eyed indifferent nonchalance, if you gather what I mean, is the slant. Queenie has been fed sleek with compliments, particularly about the locks. Try, after a pause, a clever little touch anent her brain * * * Dear God! If I but had the looks, with my experience I could go steaming past all Queenies sans a check.

Let the buoyancy be hoisted still another notch when entrance to the great man's presence is actually imminent. The bluff's the thing. Among Granther and the executive products of his school, a fetich has been made of the strange and unnatural combination of impudence and low, slapstick craft, to which a new slang contraction, as hideous as the quality itself, had to be assigned, because no term ignobly descriptive enough to fit it existed in the lan-

guage previously. "Pep"—begotten by Insanity upon Ignorance—is now the Open Sesame to the job-file.

Although inept and without business training I sold myself by pep in rapid succession to four publishers, an insurance firm, a calendar house, and a manufacturer of display advertising. Most of the deals were entirely unscrupulous on both sides. I meant to get what I could and leave when I chose, regardless of an employer's convenience, and it soon became patent, to even so unsophisticated a perception as mine, that the employer's real purpose was to hire me cheaply, squeeze me dry, and throw away the refuse.

The irritating art of the performance was its unintelligent hypocrisy. Like the gross flattery which we all adore, hypocrisy is a wonderful emollient, without which Anglo-Saxons certainly could not endure life among themselves. I could admit the necessity of softening rough business contracts. But why (I argued) go to so much trouble to obscure issues when the actual result was not efficiency but a waste? It would be more profitable in dollars and cents to hire a man on a basis of frankness, and let him develop his ability or prove his unfitness without the wretched humbug that pervaded the houses.

The criticism is elementary, and in fact the condition which calls it forth is the essential weakness of our business life, and to a degree of the social situation underlying it. As a people, Americans are not only snobs, but wasteful snobs. We enjoy the proud distinction, today, of a nation which has passed from youth to a knowledge of decadence, without acquiring the wisdom that should accompany age. Soon it may be a case of *La jeunesse ne peut plus, la viellesse ne sait pas.*

Could imagination conceive a wilder,

more insane orgy than the American lunch hour? At the stroke of twelve innumerable dens of trade spew forth their hordes for stoking, and for an hour tumult rages in malodorous eating-rooms. A ravenous animal lurks behind each chair or stool to seize it, warm, from beneath its goulash-spattered tenant, who, streaming gravy, dashes popeyed past the toothpicks to the street. A lunchroom, and often the restaurant of the anchovy-and-alligator-pear class, suggests at five minutes past one a murder scene, wherein a fair young thing in white has been done to a bloody death betwixt the invading hordes and the home guard of terrible waiters.

Meseems that our national hypocrisy about women may be behind Granther's dry-rot, and the consequent stupidity of our business tactics. To delve too deeply into that side of the subject would be to court trouble. But it is indisputable that the position of the American woman in business is more vague than her continental cousin's. In Europe, women become active factors, definite influences or out-and-out parasites. The American woman, with her indefinite scope, is forced to blunder in all three orbits.

From the hound's level, feminine influence in a house is easily measurable. Not only the salaried assistants, but file-clerks, key-pushers and stem-winders, can form a fairly accurate estimate of the extent to which the chief and his *ober-leutnants* are swung by favorites; and most interestingly, the houses in which feminine influence, even of the comparatively inefficient American kind, is not marked, are anaemic.

Vulgar 'tis, but true, that where the switchboard gel in the entrance has a standing order instantly to notify Mr. Snicks, in the office, of the arrival at

the curb of Mrs. Snicks' car, and a hasty temporary readjustment of the office personnel ensues, a scandal may be impending, but there is life. Snicks, a full-blooded ruffian with nightly jazz tendencies, may have in his powerful brain, half-developed, a gorgeously imaginative scheme for extending his business over a continent. If he were less a mongrel, and could have the help of a thoroughbred, he would bring it to fruition. As it is, we see the effort abortive; perhaps a crash follows, perhaps only the disintegration of Snicks into a Granther.

Snick has neither a competent wife nor a clever mistress. Mrs. Snicks has a bore for a husband; but a Frenchwoman might at least have reduced the situation to order. The truth is that Granther needs a vigorous application of really first-class, disciplined she-brains.

Europeans and Orientals think us fools in our slavery to our women. The former, living among us, is frequently corrupted, if not in the first generation, in the second. The latter holds his own longer. The Jew, inalienably Oriental, is likely to maintain his efficiency in proportion to his orthodoxy.

They are orthodox Jews to whom I, in my small sphere, owe surcease from business piffling. So much has been written about the Race by Cousins Pro and Con, and the Uplift Bros., that I shall not elaborate, but will merely compare my relief in working for a Jewish house to that of a war-worn husband who has escaped from a terrible wife to an excellently-run hotel. Utterly weary of Granther's sterile eccentricities, I find the alien entertainment delightful. My remedy is not a panacea. Just as some lovers like to pay their court to rabbit-women, who fuss about the flannels and dutifully flap their upper lips in lieu of cerebration, so do

many workers relish Granther and his solemn fume of petty indecisions. Such would not find delight in Jewry.

Deponent liketh the lethal woman and the vital job, infused by the Vision. The Oriental imagination reaches forward, creating a colorful dream-province of dominant industry, and the Semitic genius for accomplishment follows with much dust but also with decision. The Jewish business mind has few doubts; it knows what it wants, and is supported by centuries of courageous history and valid tradition. I do not think that Granther will develop true efficiency until, like an English lawn, he has a history; like the Jews, a tradition; and like all empires which have maintained a real dominance, a system of social values—a caste system.

The good democrat takes to caste as blithely as a New England deacon plunges into soft layer cake; any conscript who was at Brest or Tours knows it. The proposition that caste is advantageous, I will debate further against any licensed historian or economist who sends me an intelligent inquiry and a self-addressed stamped envelope, at any reasonable time prior to the actual beginning of my deterioration from success; and as an earnest of the quality of my steel, let me hint of acquaintance with the Platform. As one Chatauquan to others—

But standing as I do, coyly where success and failure meet, I am still sensitive to the playboy's emotions, and at the moment, the most important thing in the world appears to me to be the privilege of escorting to a recital by Ysaye a most glorious lady, who proves my pessimistic theories by supplying, in mind, life and person, a bright exception to them. Debate postponed. *Arrivederci.*

STEPHEN TA VAN.

The Mutative Wight

I was a warrior in the Roman age
And with some Caesar swung a doughty sword.
By lion-hearted Richard did I wage
Grim combat with the Saracenic horde.

I was a knight-at-arms in Lancelot's day
And tilted Fame in many a tournament.
With Pete Ronsard I wrought the roundelay,
With brother Franc Villon his testament.

I was a courtier in Jack Suckling's time,
A gallant in the days of Dick Lovelace,
And more than one fine sonnet did I rhyme
To win some token of my lady's grace.

In Spenser's generation I aspired
A patron in the person of the King.
With Master William Shakespeare I acquired
A canniness for almost anything.

With Amerigo and Christopher I sailed
Uncharted seas to continents unknown.
By Jack Lafitte and "Johnny" Jones I hailed
The empery of the waters as my own.

With Danny Boone and Davy Crockett, I
Did blaze a trail where never man abode.
Last year I battled Boches in the sky —
Today I am a salesman "on the road."

BUFFINGTON TUTT

The attitude of an angel towards a saint must be a curious blend of humility and disgust.

A drunkard is a visionary who cannot for an instant tolerate the world as it is.

If our own knees did not shake so hard we might perceive that the other man's are also beating a tattoo.

Tales of the Psychometric Reporter

I HOW I INTERVIEWED BACCHUS.

THE chief wants to see you." It was the office boy of my Sunday editor who spoke. I had a standing start, but I beat him back to the desk by three feet. The chief glared at me, hid his income tax blank in a drawer, and said mildly:

"Benson, go get an interview with Bacchus on prohibition."

My ears stiffened like a man's in the heart of the Sahara who has just been told there was a brewery on the other side of the next sandheap.

"You mean, boss, Bacchus, the original rum-hound?" I falsettoed, my voice seeming to come out of my eyes.

"Why, you don't think I mean the president of the Fudge Union, do you?" he said, hiding his patent space cutter in a drawer.

He swivelled around to his Give-Them-the-Gate list. I knew the interview was over. I knew I had to get that interview with Bacchus or sign up somewhere else. I ambled up Broadway.

"What! you never heard of psychometry?"

I turned quickly. Two men, arguing excitedly, disappeared in the crowd. But the word "psychometry" remained. Was it a hunch?

What in the name of the Sacred Soup of Siam was psychometry? I turned into the nearest branch public library and feverishly turned the leaves of the dictionary. Psychometry is the big trick among the Occult Squad. It is "divination by touch." If you have psychometric powers you can call up the history of a man or an object by holding it in your hand. Hold your sweetheart's fan and all her flirtations will swim into your brain. Press a dollar of your landlord's in your hand and

his profiteering crimes will be yours.

A great thought-flash illuminated me. Maybe I had that power—maybe I was a born psychometrist.

Another tremendous thought opened its barrage on me. If I had that power, why couldn't I by holding a bottle of old Burgundy in my fist and letting my cerebrum and cerebellum float on their backs in my consciousness evoke Bacchus and interview him?

But the bottle of Burgundy? It was as rare as tobacco in a ten-cent pack of Mahomet cigarettes, worth its weight in radium, and the lamps of the Eighteenth Amendment sleuths were full upon me.

One thought pumps another out of the old pipes of our memory.

I knew the butler in the mansion of "Old Pale Ale" Smith, the millionaire clubman up the Avenue. He and his family were at Palm Beach. Would the butler let me in old "Pale Ale's" wine cellar, estimated to contain about a billion dollars' worth of joy-juice?

Easiest thing ever. Tom Pourboire not only let me in the cellar, but spread a table for me down there, and yanked out a bottle of old Burgundy. I was his bonus-fide guest, under the law; he should worry and so forth.

I buried my fist in the dust of the bottle of the unopened wine—I wasn't after the drink this time—and called:

"Oh, Bacchus, God of Booze, be with me now! You've done me many a rotten turn before the Ginmillennium set in—now you can do me a good turn. Appear, dear old Bac.!"

There was a terrible commotion away back in the dark of the vast cellar. Boxes and casks rumbled and fell. Into the light walked Bacchus. He was flesh and blood!

I knew he was Bacchus instinctively, although he had a Jack Dempsey hair cut, wore a bartender's white apron, a sport shirt, and a Japanese silk crêpe tie.

His face was the image of the late Johnny Walker.

In his hand he carried a large bottle of wine with the Latin inscription in huge letters burned in the glass:

"From the cellars of Nero, Chateau Orgy, Anno 61."

He took a seat on a cask of whiskey after shaking hands with me and addressing me as "Benson old pal."

"Talk low and quick," he said. "I've got old John Barleycorn, Grandfather Gambrinus and Little Lord Absinthe back in that corner. We're hiding from the raiders. Ain't this a great disguise? I dress according to the country I'm in. We're trying to drink up everything Old Pale Ale has in his cellar before he gets back from the beach.

"The gang back there are sick—it's a big job drinking all the stored stuff. You know I could always carry it. Where there's a wine there's a way with me.

"Well, go ahead, Benson, and spill your wheeze."

"What are you doing on earth, anyway, Bac., old boy?" I asked, looking at my questionnaire in my hat.

"Well, you humans put it over on us when the Great War got going. Mars took over all the gods and put Olympus on a war basis. He said as this was the biggest job he'd ever pulled off, he wanted clear heads about him, and that all the gods had to cut out late hours and all drink. Of course he was looking straight at me.

"John Barleycorn he said he could handle, because John could never handle himself. He didn't care much about Gambrinus, said he was only a German

milkman after all. He didn't even argue with Little Lord Absinthe—just booted him into the Styx, where old Charon kept kicking him along in disgust. But for me he had some respect; said I was as ancient as the earth, the gods and everything else. Tapping me on the bean wouldn't do any good, so he granted me a vacation to the Earth till he got through with his job.

"I took the three of them back there with me, and I've certainly had my troubles ever since. Truth to tell, Benson, we've been so lit up since we landed that I don't know how I'll get that gang back. Pegasus has become an old spavin. We're stuck."

"How did prohibition in America hit you?" I went on in a business-like voice, giving him the second question in my hat.

Before Bacchus could answer a voice that sounded like a singing coal mine came over the top from the abysmal darkness of the cellar:

"Hoorah! Hoorah! I'm a guy in wrong."

"The Constitush has got me an' me bar-lee-corn!"

"Can it!" shouted Bacchus. "No wonder they've got you wandering from cellar to cellar."

"That's the guy that put me on the blink. Why, his breath blew out the fires of Vulcan one morning Up There," continued Bacchus, addressing me. "John was a low-brow, never could disguise himself and was always singing out of turn. It's the bad actors that kill all the fun, and that fellow has certainly been a bad actor, although when there's any sickness around there ain't a better friend than—"

"But about prohibition, Bac?" I insisted, my reportorial instinct on the alert.

"Let me tell you, Benson," said Bacchus, poking his bottle of Nero's finest under my nose to emphasize his opinions, "that prohibition serves you right. You disgraced a god—that's me. I invented the finest toothache and grouch killer ever known—me and Gambrinus; but you Americans chucked us and picked up with that rowdy John Barleycorn and his crazy pals. You took that roughneck to your own tables, introduced him to your families, and when he couldn't come to you, you invented a Family Entrance and went to him, ramming me into hideous red-ink joints and keeping me alive on bum table d'hotes.

"It is written of old—by some wise guy or other—that no one can offend a god and get away with the goods. Why, I'm the oldest of the gods, the best and the healthiest. You made me a Cinderella and lavished all your love on that demon back there. Look at me now.

"Look at this rig I've got to dress in! Look how I've got to go sneaking around from cellar to cellar with that rowdy back there—and I a god, celebrated by poets and prophets in all ages, the friend of all real human beings, the father of laughter, the inventor of merriment. You've busted my heart—that's what you have!"

And dear old Bacchus began to blubber all over the cask. Near me a voice began to croak.

"I'm old! I'm old! I'm beer that's near. I'll go to Jersey to get up cheer!"

"That's old Gam." said Bacchus, drying his eyes. "He too's in bad with me."

"Will you come back, Bacchus?" I asked, that being the third question pasted in my hat.

"Did you ever hear of anything that didn't come back?" answered Bacchus, righting himself into something of his old-time form.

"As badly as you've treated me in this country, I'm going to stick. As a matter of fact, since Mars still has all his war measures in force up there, I've got to stick. I need America as much as you are going to need me. I am about twenty-thousand years old and I've traveled a bit, as your classical sharps will tell you.

"Well, Benson, I can tell you that there never was a nation or a people who tried to can me who didn't start toward Davy Jones' locker, which is, as you know, quite different from a club locker.

"There never was one exception. The Eskimos never had any use for me—and look at them! Ice eaters and the North Pole for a bathtub, and never a drink of the old stuff to warm them up. Jack Frost has got their souls as well as their bodies, and it'll get yours if you don't look out. Where life flourishes there am I; where it begins to frost, I retire."

"What will be the ultimate effect of prohibition, Bac.?" I asked.

"Long faces, the dark brown taste of a universal mental grouch, and the disappearance of pleasure. Seriousness, my boy, has destroyed more people than even old John, back there."

"Are you and the crowd back there going to get away with all this stock?" I asked.

"Every bit of it without drawing a cork. When Old Pale Ale gets back his bottles will be as he left them, but there'll not be a drop in them."

"How's that done?"

"We absorb it by psychometric thirst." Bacchus replied with a tremendous guffaw.

His laugh was so loud that it startled me, and I took my hand off the bottle of Burgundy.

Bacchus had disappeared.

BENJAMIN DE CASSERES.

Ambrose Bierce and the American Democracy

WHAT can one do with such people," asked an intelligent Chinaman twenty years ago of the American democracy, "what can one do with such people, who have the conceit of the ages and the ignorance of all time?" It was this same Chinaman—or masquerading Caucasian—who described the American as "something into which is blown a tremendous energy, that is very wearisome, a bombast which is the sum of that of all nations."

Intelligent foreigners have often proved illuminating critics of this remarkable democracy. Chinamen, especially, have seen us very much as we are. And Frenchmen have perhaps appraised us more truthfully than any other Europeans. But critics of the American democracy, born among us, have been amazingly few. I can think of but three: Ambrose Bierce, dead—the devil alone could tell you in what part of Mexico—, Charles Marcotte, possibly dead and certainly obscure, and H. L. Mencken, at this moment very much alive.

Political theorizers and commentators upon government have been many—hymn-singers and apostles of joy, mostly, with nothing but sugared praise for popular government, nothing but awe before the truth, beauty and wisdom of majorities, nothing but admiration for this magnificent democracy of which it was their good fortune to be members. But the men of American citizenship who have been able to survey the democracy of America from a sane perspective—, who, while rubbing elbows with it, have been able to see it as from a belfry or the moon, have been,

in so far as I know, barely three. The remainder of the mob and the remainder of the theorizers and "literatuses" have paid but little attention to the astounding absurdity of this democracy of theirs which, "with a bombast which is the sum of that of all nations," proclaims itself a bird of rarest plumage and preens its feathers, with unconscious humor, before the world.

I am speaking here of Ambrose Bierce. He was the first real critic of democracy to appear after the nation reached its majority. I shall not speak of Charles Marcotte, who published his "Governments and Politicians" in 1893—a surprising but faultily written volume—, nor of Mr. Mencken who is only now, in this decade, turning the light of reason upon the American democracy with greater force, perhaps, than even Bierce (whose misanthropism somewhat crippled his effects).

Ambrose Bierce was a journalist who, it must be confessed, scattered his efforts. And yet, although no given book of his deserves to go down intact in the preserved literature of the world, from his complete works one volume can be collected which will deserve to abide in the House of Books, on the Shelf of Mockery, with the best of Voltaire, Swift and France. It is a pity that he is known chiefly as a writer of horribles.

I am here quoting haphazard from his works as they happen to apply to the American democracy, or democracy in general, in hope that I may persuade a few good Americans to procure and read his inquiry into the decline and fall of the American Commonwealth, his fables, his allegories, and particularly "The

Shadow on the Dial" and "The Devil's Dictionary." On Bierce's irony and wit in the grand manner, or the petty, it is not my purpose to touch. But I may be allowed to quote—since few in these parts are familiar with the productions of this strange humorist—this:

"The world was made a sphere in order that men should not push one another off," and these definitions from the "Devil's Dictionary":

"Rum: fiery liquors that produce madness in total abstainers."

"Worship: *Homo Creator's* testimony to the sound construction and fine finish of *Deus Creatus*."

"Weather: a permanent topic of conversation among persons whom it does not interest, but who have inherited a tendency to chatter about it from naked arboreal ancestors whom it keenly concerned."

"Reality: the Dream of a mad philosopher . . . the nucleus of a vacuum."

"Saint: a dead sinner revised and edited."

And this:

"How fascinating is Antiquity!—in what a golden haze the ancients lived their lives! We too are ancients. Of our enchanting time Posterity's great poets will sing immortal songs, and its archaeologists will reverently uncover the foundations of our palaces and temples. Meantime we swap jack-knives."

Ambrose Bierce, a determined misanthropist, was a keen investigator of popular government from the first. He noted early "that progress downward which is the invariable and unbroken trend of republican institutions."

He saw through the farce of balloting. His serious pages are full of references to the democratic system of majority-government, in which all difficulties are solved by counting noses. He speaks, in one of his essays indeed, of

this "human nose as a measure of human happiness—not the size of it, but its numbers; its frequent or infrequent occurrence upon the human face."

"In any matter of which the public has imperfect knowledge," he says in "The Game of Politics," "public opinion is as likely to be erroneous as an individual equally uninformed. To hold otherwise is to hold that wisdom can be got by combining many ignorances. A man who knows nothing of algebra cannot be assisted in the solution of an algebraic problem by calling in a neighbor who knows no more than himself, and the solution approved by the unanimous vote of ten million such men would count for nothing against that of a competent mathematician."

Ambrose Bierce, like all sane and intelligent men, knew that majorities are stupid, capricious and cruel. He fought to the last against the principles of democratic government, government by majorities—which is to say, the selection by dolts and dumb-skulls of the functionaries of state, the determination of national policies by the illiterate. "If history teaches anything worth learning," he says in his essay on "Civilization," it teaches that the majority of mankind is neither good nor wise." Elsewhere he says: "It seems to me that the average man, as I know him, is very much a fool, and something of a rogue as well. . . . He has only a smattering of education, knows virtually nothing of political history, nor history of any kind, is incapable of logical, that is to say clear thinking, is subject to the suasion of base and silly prejudices, and selfish beyond expression . . . How is it that his views, of so intricate and difficult matters as those of which public opinion makes pronouncement through him, are entitled to such respect? . . . Majorities, embracing

as they do, the most ignorant, seldom think rightly: public opinion, being the voice of mediocrity, is commonly a mistake and a mischief." "Majorities rule, not because they are right, but because they are able to rule."

It was Ambrose Bierce who correctly labelled our civilization a "pickpocket civilization." And it was Ambrose Bierce who remarked "that imitative quality in the national character, which, by its superior intensity, serves to distinguish us from the apes that perish."

The American democracy, Bierce said, is "tolerant of successful knavery." "A good American is, as a rule, pretty hard upon roguery, but he atones for his austerity by an amiable toleration of rogues. His only requirement is that he must personally know the rogues . . . We may know them guilty, but we meet them, shake hands with them, drink with them, and if they happen to be wealthy or otherwise great, invite them to our houses, and deem it an honor to frequent theirs."

The farcical Christianity of the American democracy was a continual butt for Bierce's satire. And he saw as well as any the pitiable hoax of the contemporary church. He refers, in one place, to "the pious gentlemen who serve (with rank, pay and allowances) as Chaplains in the Army and Navy." And in a glorious passage rebutting a certain Dr. Parkhurst who had been so indiscreet as to champion the clergyman's love of lucre: "I think that so faithful a disciple as the Reverend Dr. Parkhurst has still a place to lay his head, a little of the wherewithal to be clothed, and a good deal of the power of interpretation to excuse it." Of missions he remarked: "Each sect would make this a Theocracy if it could, and would then make short work of any missionary from abroad . . . Happily

all religions but ours have the sloth and timidity of error; Christianity alone, drawing vigor from eternal truth, is courageous enough and energetic enough to make itself a nuisance to people of every other faith." And on this subject of practical Christianity, he said: "I am indifferently versed in theology —whereof, so help me Heaven, I do not believe one word—but know something of religion. I know, for example, that Jesus Christ was no soldier; that war has two essential features which did not command His approval: aggression and defense. No man can either attack or defend and remain Christian, and if no man, no nation."

In Bierce's essay on "Civilization" you will find this: "The proposition that the average American workingman is better off than the South Sea Islander, lolling under a palm and drunk with overeating, will not bear a moment's examination. It is we scholars and gentlemen that are better off." And on this same subject of the superiority of civilization to savagery, he wrote the following which I cannot forbear to quote:

"It is admitted that the South Sea Islander in a state of nature is overmuch addicted to the practice of eating human flesh; but concerning that I submit: first, that he likes it; second, that those who supply it are mostly dead. It is upon his enemies that he feeds, and these he would kill anyhow, as we do ours."

Ambrose Bierce had nothing "to offer." He was not a constructive critic of democracy. He admitted that monarchical forms of government were likewise faulty. He seemed, however, to prefer a monarchy to a republic, and perhaps an aristocracy to either. At any rate, he was quite positive about democratic governments. He knew that government by the majority is inevit-

ably blockhead government—cruel, capricious, besotted and unjust. And he assaulted democracy at every opportunity. Particularly, he made war on those demagogues and charlatans who attempt to glorify democracy, who are perpetually preaching of the truth, beauty and wisdom of majorities. It was against those who gild the obscene truth that the majority of mankind is stupid, incompetent and wicked that he fired most of his broadsides. He offered nothing in place of democracy. "My allegiance to republican institutions," he said, "is slack through lack of faith in them as a practical system of governing men as men are." But he said also: "I am no contestant for forms of government—no believer in either the practical value or the permanence of any that has yet been devised."

He would have agreed with Jerome Coignard in his dictum on the inhabitants of Montbard. His attitude was one of bitter irony toward man, the monkey, in all his antics. And I can do no better, in concluding these extracts, than by quoting the following from "The American Sycophant":

"Not only are we no less sycophantic than the people of monarchial countries; we are more so. We grovel before their exalted personages, and perform in addition a special prostration at the clay feet of our own idols—which *they* do not revere. The typical 'subject,' hat in hand to his sovereign and his noblemen, is a less shameful figure

than the 'citizen' executing his genuflexion before the public of which he is himself a part. No European court journal, no European courtier, was ever more abject in subservience to the sovereign than are the American newspaper and the American politician in flattery of the people. Between the courtier and the demagogue I see nothing to choose. They are moved by the same sentiment and fired by the same hope. Their method is flattery, and their purpose profit. Their adulation is not a testimony to character, but a tribute to power, or the shadow of power. If this country were governed by its criminal idiots we should have the same attestations of their goodness and wisdom, the same competition for their favor, the same solemn doctrine that their voice is the voice of God, our children would be brought up to believe that an Idiocracy is the only rational form of government. And, for my part, I'm not at all sure that it would not be a pretty good political system, as political systems go. I have always, however, cherished a secret faith in Smithocracy, which seems to combine the advantages of both the monarchial and republican idea. If all the offices were held for life by Smiths—the senior John being President—we should have a settled and orderly succession to allay all fears of anarchy and a sufficiently wide eligibility to feed the fires of patriotic ambition. All could not be Smiths, but many could marry into the family."

SILAS BRENT

It is well to know the truth and speak it, but it is better to know the truth and speak about palm-trees.—*Arab Proverb.*

It is with narrow-souled people as with narrow-necked bottles—the less they have in them, the more noise they make pouring it out.—*Pope.*

It is better to fool one's self completely than to be very wise.

Gay Thomas: Old Style

There was four swinging suns in heaven,
There was four rolling seas on earth,
The stars was seventy and seven
Before Gay Thomas came to birth.

Gay Thomas he was born of woman,
Gay Thomas was a son of man,
There was four swinging suns in heaven
When Gay Thomas' life began.

Gay Thomas lived in pomp and glory,
Gay Thomas was an earthly prince,
Gay Thomas span a famous story
Of wonder and magnificence.

There is four swinging suns in heaven,
There is four rolling seas on earth,
The stars is seventy and seven
And theirs is all the mirth.

JOHN MCCLURE

Starrett's Chicago Letter

SINCE H. L. Mencken has called Chicago "the literary capital of the United States" it is meet and proper for a progressive literary journal to support a correspondent at the capital. Chicago has been the cradle of many movements, since the day the now famous Elgin movement was established, a few miles to the westward, and rocks a number of them at present with incredible enthusiasm. Those it does not rock, it stones . . . I thank you. Here, then, at the heart of things, I propose to play Autolycus to *The Double Dealer*, and to mix praise with blame and comment with criticism, as recklessly as I mix my poetical allusions.

Seriously, the number of Chicagoans who have done noteworthy things, or who, in one way or another, have been honored for achievement, within recent weeks, is significant—significant of something, and, I think, of Chicago. Edgar Lee Masters has published "Mitch Miller," hailed as a classic of the "Tom Sawyer" school, and Floyd Dell, formerly literary critic of the Chicago Evening Post, has published "Moon-Calf." About both these novels, the best critics have said enthusiastic things and there can be little doubt that they belong to our permanent literature. Dell is a New Yorker, just now, and editor of *The Liberator*, but that his heart turns backward is evidenced by his

book. In poetry, Carl Sandburg, writing with all his early gusto, has given us "Smoke and Steel," his third and perhaps his most powerful collection of verses, and Masters' "Domesday Book" also has been released by its publishers. This latter volume is rather tremendous, and is a return to the author's "Spoon River" manner. Somewhere in its depths, a shrewd and ultra-modern bookseller furtively pointed out to me certain lines which, in his opinion, might allow of his cataloguing the work under the caption "Facetiae." He chuckled obscenely; and I let him live out of sheer good nature, for I had sold an essay that day: but this sort of person should be expunged from human record. It was some such ass who brought about the suppression of "Jürgen," in New York, and who will turn up with a leer, doubtless, when my own unwritten novel comes from the press.

Then there is Knut Hamsun, who used to ring up fares on the old Halsted street line, who went back to Sweden (I think it was Sweden; it may have been Norway) and wrote novels, and who now is a Nobel prize winner and called "the best writer in Scandinavia." John Masefield did that sort of thing, and look at him now. He was once a bartender in New York, and something, I think, in Chicago, although the last time he was here, and lectured at Orchestra Hall, he looked like a lost soul beset by furies, surrounded as he was by innumerable club women eager to shake the hand that once had combed the flowing locks of Münchner. When the conductors and bartenders begin to write their novels or their memoirs we shall be able to talk more loudly of "our literature." But our own submerged ones, if they are writing, are not finding publishers. I don't think they are writing.

An interesting sign of New York's decadence as a literary center, is the attention the New York publishers are giving Chicago "Reviews." The Chicago Evening Post, Daily News, and Tribune, I believe are more frequently quoted in advertisements than the other journals that boast a book page, and when a critical and descriptive booklet is required, it is likely to be a Chicago critic that gets the job. Llewellyn Jones of the Post has just produced an excellent eulogy of Joseph Hergesheimer for Knopf, and not long ago did the same for Johann Bojer, for that author's publisher, while Burton Rascoe, long the Tribune critic, is the leading contributor to Knopf's handsome booklet on Mencken.

* * *

Jones, by the way, is conducting an amiable altercation with Amy Lowell anent the form, function, physics, eugenics and *raison d'être* of poetry. The debate has not yet reached any platform, but has been exercised in the columns of a number of journals, and in the mails. Jones knocked out a home run by reprinting and circulating as a pamphlet a long article contributed by himself to the Sewanee Review; and it is now Miss Lowell's inning * * *. Rascoe, who, since leaving the Tribune in circumstances that point to a disagreement, has been ranching in Oklahoma (do they ranch in Oklahoma?), is reported to be writing the G. A. N., but actually he is translating French classics for Knopf. "Mademoiselle de Maupin" and "Manon Lescaut" were the first two. I wish he would translate Remy de Gourmont and Octave Mirbeau, but he won't—I've asked him. He says they are "too much so."

Harry Hansen, who succeeded Henry Blackman Sell as literary editor of the Daily News, so far as I can ascertain has written no booklets, but is likely to

be called upon, at any moment, to pamphletize F. Scott Fitzgerald.

* * *

"Stuart Mason," Oscar Wilde's bibliographer (in private life Mr. Christopher S. Millard of the Bungalow Bookshop, London), has sent me his latest catalogue. It is delightful on a number of counts, but hidden away for the shrewd ones to find there is the record of a magnificient feud. As follows: Aldous Huxley having called Wilde a "second rate literary man," in some issue of the London Mercury, Mason reprinted the insolence on a page of his catalogue, and immediately opposite listed Huxley's two esteemed volumes (which bring about 30 shillings in their first edition) at a shilling and sixpence for large paper copies. To add insult to this injury, he quoted a London reviewer on Huxley to the effect that there had been nothing like Aldous since Oscar Wilde. Peace hath her victories!

* * *

Some time, if I am permitted, I shall talk at greater length of The Bookfellows. At present, let me say that they are doing nice things nicely, and will do better things. They publish only for their own membership, and their publications are handsomely printed in limited editions. The latest issue of the organ of the order, the Step Ladder, contains a clinical analysis of publishers' prices, the first stone in a threatened campaign. George Steele Seymour heads the order.

* * *

The idea of a poet being a "best seller" is shocking; but Carl Sandburg has given up his rented place in Maywood and has purchased a retired villa in Elmhurst, a little nearer the city. Three sentinel geese patrol the front yard. What they symbolize I do not know.

Another minor poet has burst into song bloom on the subject of "Sleep", in a recent issue of a popular magazine. In praising sleep, poets often neglect to say how much their art promotes it.

* * *

Walter M. Hill, the antiquarian bookseller, has become a publisher in earnest. His recent ventures include collectors' brochures on Stevenson, Ambrose Bierce, Lemuel Gulliver, and Lincoln.

* * *

Charles C. FitzMorris has been appointed chief of police of Chicago. Charlie FitzMorris . . . ! As a high school boy, Fitz won a 'round the world race for Chicago, in competition with a handful of callow youths from other cities, all financed by the Hearst newspapers. Later, he became a reporter for Hearst, still later he was made secretary to Mayor Harrison and was continued in that office by Mayor Thompson, and now he is Thompson's choice for police chief. There is material for a special article in this, but no room in this department. Yet a chronicle of Chicago events of interest to enlightened persons would be incomplete without this mention. I await my first sight of him in uniform. Like grand opera tenors, one thinks of police chiefs as fat; but occasionally a particularly good one surprises us in error. FitzMorris can still wear the dress suit he wore when he was married. Chicago's far-famed crooks are reported to be "coming right down."

* * *

Eastern book notices chronicle the prospective advent of "The Americanization of Edward Bok," the gentleman who for years edited *The Ladies' Home Journal*. No doubt this will interest many persons, but a more important matter, which, as yet, has had all too

little attention, might be called "the Bok-ing of America." I suspect Mr. Bok of responsibility for the bungalow, the casserole, pink literature for pale people, illustrated magazine covers, and other things too irritating to mention . . . His disservice to literature hardly can be overestimated . . . Yet they say he is a gruff masculine

person, in private life, with a voice like a rusty lock.

* * *

Glancing over what I have written, it all seems uncommonly amiable, which I had not exactly intended. Perhaps, however, it is as well. The long winter days are ahead, and one should hoard one's ammunition.

VINCENT STARRETT

If the rich could not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, the poor would soon lose their taste for doing it.

The reason why so few marriages are happy, is because young ladies spend their time in making nets, not in making cages.—*Dean Swift*.

Indignation is always an acknowledgment of defeat. When we are beaten we bawl for the rule book.

Parading the Pink Patella

OUR friends, the ladies, have invariably been a source of wonder, but in this abstruse era they seem to have shattered all previous records by a brazen attempt to lay bare the whole show and prompt us to apologize for our intrusion into polite society with the spirit of the man who inadvertently opens the wrong bath-house door. Times have changed, you say. Questionless they have, but we are old-fashioned enough to opine that the hoary old gentleman with the scythe cannot condone everything. We will always hold, for instance, that the *modus operandi* of the boudoir should remain there, in

theory, at least and not be displayed in the corner drug store.

Oddly enough, instead of admitting these idiosyncrasies as such, they generally see fit to conjure up some saner alibi, to salve the conscience, we fancy. Didn't we inquire of a young lady last summer, when the trick of rolling the hose had grown into an obsession, the point of so ridiculous a fashion? And didn't she strike us cold with the rather pathetic rejoinder that ladies of discrimination are oblivious to fashion where comfort and common sense are concerned? Not being able to laugh that down we chanced a guess that were

Fifth Avenue or the Rue de la Paix to feature them held up from the sides by a three inch telephone cable swung around the neck, the ladies of discrimination would at once set out to bear the agony of lacerated flesh without the twitch of a plucked eyebrow. Similarly, the use of translucent, indeed, transparent materials for the garb of the day, and the shaving down of the evening gown to a degree whereat even the most hardened begin to whisper "daring," cannot help but excite our sensitive imaginations.

Is it, after all, a mere blind obedience to the mandates of the fashion-mongers, or have the whole army of their followers taken up the movement with the assurance that it is a new and subtle form of intrigue for flattery, matrimony, and whatnot? If the latter be the case, the ladies are plainly on the wrong trail for in the dear old yester-

year it was found not *a propos* to unveil the remoter charms, yet they received their flattery, matrimony, and whatnot, just the same. But today your little fellow toddles out on the front porch and reviews the pageant of femininity in all its frankness, as unperturbed as a commanding general.

This, of course, is only part of a complex problem, and we see the defenders of the modern passing it lightly off and calling us prudes. Well, we have never yet been known to apply sobriquets to the spade, nor do we countenance the drawing of the curtains of respectability before the central facts of life, but if prudes we be, we beg one parrying thought: We cannot stand by and see the beauty and romanticism of a perennial institution torn to tatters without one little wistful glance backward.

ANTHONY GALT

The sinner jogs along his path, comforted and upheld with the thought of the joy there will be in heaven when he repents.

Reviews of Books

SAN CRISTOBAL DE LA HABANA.

(HERGESHEIMER, JOSEPH: *San Cristóbal de la Habana*, N. Y., Knopf, 1920.)

Mr. Hergesheimer, through his long years of literary apprenticeship and in his present period of remarkable popular success, has followed constantly the will-o'-the-wisp of style. It has been, since his beginning twenty years ago, Mr. Hergesheimer's intention to supplement the world's supply of beautiful letters. This is something to be grateful for.

The writers of prose in America who have seriously and faithfully attempted to penetrate the mysteries of language with a view to the production of beauty can be numbered almost on one's nose. There are, perhaps, four or five. Mr. Cabell and Mr. Hergesheimer and Mr. Santayana (who, though he writes beautifully, seems to be not so much an American as an inhabitant of the moon) are among them.

"San Cristóbal de la Habana" is a study in style. Structurally and basically it is a departure from Mr. Herges-

heimer's usual field. It is not narrative fiction. It is a volume of emotional interpretation—of Mr. Hergesheimer and of Havana. He uses himself and the city as mannikins upon which to drape pages of English. And the book challenges consideration not so much for its content as for its manner. It is intended pretty surely as a *tour de force* in beautiful letters. It is issued in a fancy cover at a fancy price. It leaves the press, in fact, as a "first edition."

And Mr. Hergesheimer in this book almost proves his point. He almost proves that he is a master of style. He certainly proves that he can write much better than most of his contemporaries. He shows a deliberate and intelligent artistry in language that is no less serious and high-intentioned than that of Hawthorne, James and Hearn. He shows extreme subtlety in the recording of sensation and of idea. There is, in "San Cristóbal de la Habana," a consistent and conscious striving after beauty. It is often successful. Lovers of art in words will find much to delight them—a phrase, a picture, a sentence—in many places in this book. Remove Lafcadio Hearn, who is really not ours at all, and we have nothing in American literature in the same manner which surpasses it. I doubt if we have anything which equals it. As a study in style, I am inclined to believe that "San Cristóbal de la Habana" is a success; as contemporary writing in America goes, it is a tremendous success.

But Mr. Hergesheimer, from the very nature of his approach to literature, particularly in this book, challenges comparison with the masters of the language. He demands to be considered with the stylists of this and all time. And in this connection, one is quite safe in saying that "San Cristóbal de la Habana," as a thing of beauty, is inferior not only to a great many things

that have been done in the golden ages, but to many things recently done and now being done in English. Perhaps it is rhythmically that he is wanting. Perhaps it is in a too careful and too meticulous attention to detail that he mars the complete beauty which he desires. He is a better craftsman than Mr. Anderson or Miss Cather (who are apparently not interested in style at all). He is one of our best. But he has a long way to travel before he can arrive at the magic of James Branch Cabell, George Moore, Lord Dunsany and even Hilaire Belloc. I am not at all sure that he will ever arrive at an equivalent beauty.

But we must hope that he will. For the present he commands our highest respect. And the opening words of "San Cristóbal de la Habana" are words one cannot forget:

"There are certain cities, strange to the first view, nearer the heart than home."

APHRODITE—PIERRE LOUYS

Note—This review of Pierre Louys' *Aphrodite* was submitted to the Editors by a gentleman locally connected with the turf. They consider it an adequate estimate of this much discussed book.

My partner, Joe Goff, who also is a follower of the sport for kings told me you pay good coin for what you call "book reviews"—so I thought as long as I am with the dogs in New Orleans I could pick up a little extra jack by telling about a book I read called *Aphrodite*. And let me state right here and now it is some book; it would take the varnish off a hard-wood floor if properly applied. A Frog named Pierre

Louys wrote it—Louie knows some stuff—

Well anyway, it seems there is this frail named Chrysis back in Alexandria Egypt when the world was yet a kid; she was known as a "priestess of Aphrodite," the God of Love. Nowadays there is no polite name for them, tho about five years ago they were called white slaves. But Chrysis was no slave—she was a nifty little worker and all the high hats of Alex. as well as the two year olds would stroll by and pass the time of day as it were. Chrys was not ever what you might call lonesome.

But at this stage of the game a guy named Demetrios comes along. Deme was the kind who has to beat 'em off with a stick. He was supposed to be brought to Alexandria to carve a statue, but from the way the women blocked his path, I don't see how he had much time to carve. He had to kick them away from the door-step to get in the house—besides this he was the Queen's own special little man. This gives you an idea what class Demmy ran in and if he had a swelled head, it was no wonder.

One night he was loafing around by the docks when who should blow by but Chrysis all dolled up like a million dollars. Demmy gives her the halt signal, but she pulled right on past him without a good evening. Off he is after her and when they are neck and neck he pulls the begging line. Then Chrysis lays him out, she says even if all the other sporting girls are crazy over him, he is nothing in her young life at all. But as long as he is so anxious, if he will steal three trinkets; a comb, a mirror and a pearl necklace—well maybe. These had no value to Chrysis except as belonging to three other broads and Demetrios, not too tickled over the

idea but knowing you can't argue with a woman, said "All right."

Well, to make the story short, he cops the necklace and these two toilet articles, which the jane wears though she gets strung up by the authorities for her trouble, so the nearest Demetrios ever gets is to dream about it.

Of course, there is a lot more describing other "priestesses of Aphrodite" and the temple of this god and what went on inside, all of which this French writer seems to think as sweet and harmless as a love story in *The Ladies' Home Journal*. I asked Joe what he thought about it. Joe was a rounder in his day but he didn't agree with this guy's line. "There is nothing beautiful about playing with those babies," he says. "All they want is your dough."

Well, I guess Joe is right; but whenever I hear one of those old dried up "has beens" that have long ago run their last race and should be on pasture, give advice to the young or put over one of those laws to enforce chemical purity the way they do, I think of what this Frenchman says in the preface: "It seems that the genius of races, like that of individuals is before all sensual. All the cities which have reigned over the world—Babylon, Alexandria, Athens, Rome, Venice, Paris—have been by a general law, all the more licentious as they were more powerful, as though their dissoluteness were necessary to their splendor. The cities where the legislator has attempted to plant artificially narrow and unproductive virtue have been from the first day, condemned to absolute death."

This is a little past my speed; but if there is anything in this Pierre Louys' dope, it don't look like any cinch to place all your wad on America's nose for the final sweepstakes.

**MR. BODENHEIM
FROM THE SAHARA OF BOZART**

ONE out of the several Southern poets whom Mr. H. L. Mencken overlooked, in his final estimate of the South's place in literature, is Mr. Maxwell Bodenheim. Under the caption "The Sahara of Bozart" in his "Prejudices; Second Series," Mr. Mencken says, referring to the South: "Down there a poet is almost as rare as an oboe player, a dry point etcher or a metaphysician." We entirely concur with him. And he is as rare, likewise, "up there" and "out there" and "anywhere." But Mr. Bodenheim, we insist, is one of these rarities despite the fact that he experiments in the so called, newer forms. In his "Advice, and Other Poems," Alfred A. Knopf, 1920, he shows a decided advance over the craftsmanship of his first book, "Minna and Myself." Here we find him still evanescent, still fantastic, still bordering on preciousity, but beyond this something more, decidedly and distinctly the original artist. Observe the first poem in the book:

ADVICE TO A STREET PAVEMENT.

Lacerated grey has bitten
Into your shapeless humility.

Little episodes of roving
Strew their hieroglyphics on your muteness.
Life has given you heavy stains
Like an ointment growing stale.
Endless feet tap over you
With a maniac insistence.

O unresisting street-pavement,
Keep your passive insolence
At the dwarfs who scorn you with their feet.
Only one who lies upon his back
Can disregard the stars.

Note the crispness of the cadence, the lucidity of the picture. We lift this from page 30:

WHEN FOOLS DISPUTE.

A trickle of dawn insinuated itself
Through the crevices of black satiation.
The elderly trees coughed, lightly, hurriedly,
In remonstrance against the invasion.
Lean with a virginal poison,
The grass blades shook, immune to light and
time.

A bird lost in a tree
Shrilly flirted with its energy...
One fool, in the garden, spoke to another.

All in all, Mr. Bodenheim is a poet—not a singer, not a great poet, not exactly a satisfactory poet, but, nevertheless, a poet, and though we do not share the enthusiasm of his most ardent admirers, we do at least find in this little volume many strikingly symbolic passages.

CODA

Life—
A whimsical jest
At best.
Death----
Pardie,
The ultimate drollery.

—Adapted from the Corsican

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JUST A WORD IF YOU PLEASE

THERE IS SUCH AN ATMOSPHERE OF QUALITY ABOUT MAYER ISRAEL CLOTHING—SUCH AN AIR OF RICHNESS, REFINEMENT, AND EVEN COSTLINESSTHAT ONE IS APT TO JUMP TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THEY ARE PROHIBITIVE IN PRICE. THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER IS THAT THEY ARE EXTREMELY REASONABLE. DON'T JUMP TO CONCLUSIONS! JUST ASK THE PRICE. IT'LL PLEASE YOU.

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The DOUBLE DEALER

“.....I can deceive them both by speaking the truth.”

The appearance of Vol. I, No. 1, of THE DOUBLE DEALER, has brought forth much comment and not a little benevolent advice. We have been told by no less a critic than Mr. Mencken that “the magazine as it stands looks second-class, and is.” What magazine is first-class, we inquire?

Other weighty authorities have deplored the thinness of our book and the apparent paucity of material therein. Some, keener visioned, have carefully measured the margins and, finding a woeful lack of uniformity, have mentally consigned New Orleans printers to their respective “devils.” Finally, from the Pacific Coast, come disparagements of the lusty infant, weighing him in the scales against the aged *Atlantic Monthly*, the hoary *Mercure de France* and *Mlle. Vanity Fair*, they seem to marvel at the unevenness of the balance.

Gentlemen, what would you? Pallas Athene leapt full armed from the head of Zeus. We are not Zeuses. White Aphrodite sprang from the foam of Oceanus. We are not Titans.

Myths aside, forward realities! Admitting the above-enumerated faults, we, nevertheless, believe that in printing the January issue we offered to the discriminating a potent appetizer for the banquet to be. With this number the canapé! Do not fidget in your

seats, gentle readers. The viands are forthcoming; surprises are in store.

Reiterating our pronouncement of last month, we shall “remain only ourselves who can *deceive them both by speaking the truth.*” Beyond this we will not pledge THE DOUBLE DEALER.

VALEDICTORY

Passes, March 4th beyond public applause and scorn, from out the cartoonist’s brain and politician’s head, one Woodrow Wilson, erstwhile Coiner of Catchwords, moral White Hope of the World and President of these United States of America.

And so as he ducks out of the spotlight let us recall how he “strutted and fretted his hour on the stage.” What an hour it was! Skimming the “Watchful Waiting” period when we were “too proud to fight” we rise at an alarmingly steep incline to the “privilege of shedding America’s blood.” How this privilege was availed of is now history. So passionately did the idea take on with the civilian population that it became the fashion to boil in oil on suspicion of Teutonic sympathy; while any but the most reverend mention of the president’s name was—*Lèse Majesté*. All

doubt should be forthwith dispelled, once and for all, as to the efficacy of advertising.

Commander in Chief of The Army and Navy, virtual Dictator of the Allied Forces, he was. Not Caesar, nor Alexander, nor all the Popes and Sultans of the Ages have ever had such sway as he then held; while his vassals and underlords slapped opinion into shape, muffled the acousticon of whispered doubts as to their own godlike omniscience and stirred the stewpot of hatred with untiring arms.

Then the victory of the armies and the truce. Day of days, when he stepped like Xerxes from the regilded *Martha Washington* onto the carpet laid on the docks of Brest between the stiffened ranks of trick soldiers at "present arms." *On a acclamé le Président Wilson à Paris*, and all over Europe and the World as the one who would dole justice to all and spike the cannon forever.

Why draw the fly from out its suddenly transparent ointment—the academician befuddled between two international sharps? Why re-tell how he fell so vertically from public grace? More humane it is now to smile at the fashion in which he bilked them all, the wise ones of earth no less than the clods.

President Woodrow Wilson passes. What will happen to him is no hard conjecture. He will write.

As for us, we turn a fresh page of the ledger. Without disputing apotheosizers we offer a ready palm to Dr. Wilson, the writer. Welcome, brother of the bleeding stylus. President Wilson—*Ave atque Vale.*

BACK TO NORMALCY

Since the voters of this country have almost by acclamation elected Tweedle-dee in default of Tweedledum, we may look forward with assurance to a rule of *normalcy*. Everyone says so; the very billboards which announce the shrinking cost of vestments admit, "We are getting back to normal."

Back to normal—or better, forward to normal, to a time when the bear will lie down with the bull; when farmer, laborer, scalper, jobber, distributor, and retailer will be content to snatch only a modest share from each other; when the Rolls-Royce will again retail at a reasonable price; and the agriculturist will no longer have to sell his wheat at such a pitiful figure that Geraldyne must stop attendance of a fancy eastern finishing school. In these nearby golden days we shall all be rich, all serenely content, free to turn our minds away from sordid details to the enjoyment of Babe Ruth and Constance Talmage.

We do not want to appear irrelevant, but have you ever played golf? Then you must know that every golf player is chronically "off his game." All the other golfers will tell you that one day Q. went out and miraculously beat his record fifteen strokes. Now, he is absurdly attempting to repeat the performance. Or, as he would express it, he is trying to get "back to normal."

Fellow mal de mer-maids and men, on this economic ocean, which tosses us high, rolls us under, or leaves us petulantly becalmed, reflect—is *normalcy* a possible condition; or is it but a delusion?

VOX POPULI

Bravado, bluster, brass, swagger, assurance, front, nerve, dash, confidence, gesture, audacity—term it what you will, this “something” is the trick that puts it over on the herd.

Captain Bobadil, Sir Lucius O’Trigger, Bombastes Furioso, Chrononhotonthologos, Hector, Cromwell, Napoleon, Richard Brinsley Sheridan *et al* had the idea. Witness D’Annunzio, in our own age, an arrogant little “dago” with a fancy alias, snapping his fingers at the world. True, a sort of a poet and by many cried a genius, whatever that means, but, by all the gods, Master Jack Pudding himself.

And how many more such, because of mental limitations alone, playing to an infinitely smaller audience, may we discern about us here and elsewhere—pretty little fellows all—strutting, mouthing, pirouetting, right proud, indeed, of their divers offices, rituals, mummeries. We discover them trading in Wall Street, parading on Fifth Avenue, sauntering in and out of the exclusive clubs of any larger city—ever the super-manikin!

At patriotic meetings, at civic and dignitarian banquets, on decorated platforms, wherever speeches are addressed to the “peepul,” our Master Jack Puddings are Johnny-on-the-Spot with their frock or dinner coats, as the occasion warrants, flaunting boutonieres and immaculate waistcoats.

Nor do we detect them only in social and financial circles—politics and the professions, the Army, the Navy, and the Church are veritably *alive* with them, these pretty fellows.

We observe them, without the aid of the Press, in the Senate Chamber, the House of Representatives, the Gubernatorial incumbencies, and, if we dare, we may glance up and glimpse them smirking down upon us from the loftier sinecureties—always they are recognizable.

Even here, in this, our ancient and highly enlightened community, where Mademoiselle Frou Frou and Mrs. Grundy rub elbows at charity bazaars, and sip tea together in the Quartrante Club, these knights of the curb and carpet are conspicuous. We note them next door, across the street, in the big house on the avenue, presiding over banks, directing businesses, captaining educational and other drives, in all the tinselly places where poise and purse are paramount.

Still, when census is taken, they are not overly numerous, these charlatan chaps—remains, by necessity, *hoi polloi*, the hero-worshipping herd. Instance, J. Philander Balderdash. Behold his impressive manner, remark his popularity. Everyone secretly envies him. He is undoubtedly a big man, a regular he-man, a man of position and parts. Consider, also, Judge Flubadub. What a figure he cuts of the cultured barrister, with his slight air of condescension, and his not quite too ponderous dignity. Observe, moreover, the Honorable John L. Suchamuch and Professor Ninian Folderol and Mister This and Mister That—gallant gentlemen all, rogues all, behind the mask.

But, alas, brother, in the summing up, who is exempt? Not you, not we, not Bill Jones, a nice lad at that, nor old Doctor Mortyx in the *Maison Rouge*

Building, nor, peradventure, the Reverend Simon Pure himself.

"All is vanity," saith the Preacher. Vanity is all," retorts Master Pudding, and when the final inventory is made, we may be not a little surprised to find even ourselves, even you, and even us, checked, classed and bundled, by the Perpetrator of this "ALL" into one great sack bearing the uncompromising tag, "Mountebankiana."

THE
DOUBLE DEALER

"...I CAN DECEIVE THEM BOTH BY SPEAKING THE TRUTH."

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SAYS Pascal: "What a chimera is man, what a confused chaos! What a subject of contradiction! A professed judge of all things, and yet a feeble worm of the earth; the great depository and guardian of truth, and yet a mere huddle of uncertainty; the glory and scandal of the universe."

Indeed, what strange creatures we are, what pitiful creatures, we pantalooned men and petticoated women, weak and white and soft and timorous! What hapless, hopeless cowards, what droll fantastic double-faced fools, what absurdities, what anomalies, and yet, by the gods, what astonishing phenomena we remain.

No mundane spectacle presents, think we, at once, so pathetic and splendid an aspect as that of groping, introspective, self-conscious humanity. Man the maggot—man the deity—man the sorriest of animals by sheer power of imagination making and marring the entire visible and tangible world about him—man, the master charlatan, a victim, to the last, of his own chicanery. In very truth, man the chimera!

MARGOTTE DANCING

Women there were,
Come yesteryear,
Handsome as you are,
No less dear.

Time remembers
Of all of these
Pale-browed Helen
And Heloise.

Others there were
Whom Time forgot—
Nimble-legg'd hussies
Like you, Margotte!

A Thousand Head of Cattle

MY grandfather drove a thousand head of cattle from northern Moldova, through the plains of Valachia, across the Danube to the front at Plevna. The war was at its fiercest, Osman Pasha was getting desperate, and the besieging armies needed food.

A thousand head of cattle were let out of the stalls and corrals. Most of the men were on horseback, a few on foot, and a dozen big dogs made up the convoy. Grandfather was the last man. Two kind eyes in a savage face, a long beard inclined to be reddish brown. He never turned his face after saying good-bye to his wife, that is, as long as he thought she could see him.

She did not think. She only sat down and cried and watched the sea of cattle move in waves to the valley. Slowly they were swallowed up by the hills and she was alone. Her husband's tall lamb-skin cap was the last thing she saw go down behind the distant hills.

It was early in the morning. Soon the village began moving about and my grandmother found she was a stranger in the place. No one seemed to have noticed that the world had turned hard and cruel that morning. Only one spot and the things in it kept their former attitude toward her: the candle-dipping shop, the workmen and the cat. They came at the usual hour and proceeded in their slow, rhythmic manner.

The oldest son took charge. A silent youth, he made quick decisions and acted the part of boss as if he had done nothing else in his life. A bit clumsy

in his movements but never doubtful. The young boss was on his feet three hours after midnight and worked hard till after sunset, tending to cattle, the butcher shop and the slaughter house.

Grandmother looked after the candle shop. There she sat all day watching the wicks being lowered, a dozen at a time, into square wooden vats full of hot tallow. Slowly the wicks would go down into the white hot tallow and come out with a thin layer of tallow clinging to their thin long bodies. This was repeated many times, till the desired size was attained. There she would sit and dream of her husband on horseback, the long whip in his hand, disappearing between the hills.

Months passed and no word came from Cuna. All were getting anxious, rumors began sneaking through the town. Cuna was dead, Cuna was killed by robbers, drowned in the Danube, shot at Plevna. Two soldiers returned, wounded. They had heard nothing of either Cuna or the cattle. Grandmother wept more than usual and her cries would rise whenever she happened to see the big empty armchair at the head of the table. The eldest son spoke less and worked harder.

The two soldiers would come around regularly every afternoon and tell of the horrible scenes they had witnessed at the front. One delighted in describing scattered brains and dried blood on skulls and stones. The other described the long bayonets of the Turks or the moon-like yattaguns, "sharp like a ra-

zor." Grandmother sat there, cried, and served tea and things to the two heroes, who found in her a good listener. There were no doubts left in her mind as to the end of her husband. She would see and talk to no one but the two soldiers, who had at least seen the spot where her husband died.

She was greatly surprised one morning, when a courier arrived and brought a letter from Cuna, who was only two days behind the courier. Immediately she ran to the candle dipping shop, shouting the news to all on her way. There she made two large bundles of candles and brought them to the spacious synagogue near the top of the hill. The attendant, the "shamass," could not understand what she said and gesticulated, but he took the candles and promised to place them in the best candelabra, near the altar. Grandmother swam in a sea of emotion, and was deaf to the earnest stories of the two heroes.

* * * * *

Three heavy creaking carts and loud men stopped in front of the house at midnight. Grandmother, half clad, ran out of the house, followed after some time by the eldest son, he with the tall boots, serious face and silent as a stone. Grandmother wept and laughed and talked. Grandfather was changed. His face was sunburned but thin, he was old and bent and spoke in a sad, soft manner. Four men carried two copper kettles full of Austrian and Russian gold coins into the house. All the men climbed into the carts, and after a short talk with grandfather, left for their homes. Grandfather, aided by the eldest son, put the copper kettles into the huge brick bake-oven. He answered none of the questions put by his wife, but looked tenderly into her eyes now

and then. Most of the time he kept his eyes on the floor.

They thought his queer behavior due to weariness, and urged him to go to bed. He claimed he could not sleep, and sat down in his usual seat at the head of the long, heavy table, made of oak. There was a heavy mood in the room. Somehow, instead of joy, bad news was on the way. Grandmother thought it was money matters. She wanted to know how much he had lost. But he had gained more than expected. "Are you sick?" she demanded. "No," came the decisive answer. "Well, what happened, why don't you speak, are you not glad to be home with your wife and children, why are you sad?"

Money, wife and children had no connection with his sadness. He had made a discovery, men were bad, they were mean without reason. Grandmother sighed, she knew, the two soldiers had told her. She attempted to repeat some of the things the soldiers had related to her in great detail, but her husband would not listen. He shook his head, these things he knew and expected. Again there was silence, and the big-bearded man sat back in his chair, dropped his head forward on his chest, so that his nose was hid in his beard.

No one spoke for some time, only his wife sighed now and then. She was very nervous now, and close to bursting into tears. Cuna grunted, shook his head and slapped the table with his broad palm. Both son and wife looked up, but no other sound came to clear the air. More time passed. Grandmother decided to change things. She intended to go over and caress her husband, run her hand through his long hair. As she was about to carry out her plan, Cuna threw his head back,

sighed and said aloud, as if repeating something he had said to himself many times: "Would I had been blind, would I had been blind." His fist struck the brown oak table with force and shaking his head he repeated the sentence again and again.

Grandmother began to weep and moan softly. Both men were breathing heavily and attempted to disregard the woman. The eldest son sat upright on a hard bench and looked out of the nearest window. The deep blue night was getting pale. The lamp shone with less strength. The early risers were heard between the woman's sobs. The big, heavy man bent forward suddenly, and with clenched fists began to speak, almost in monosyllables. He made a long pause after each sentence. At no time did he look up.

The horrors of the front he had expected. Both sides seemed willing. Both sides were armed and either side could quit under certain conditions. Besides, it was all child's play after he had seen this terrible thing before he got to the front. He had crossed the Danube without a loss and the men and the cattle were resting. He was asked to go to a nearby town to complete the deal with the quartermaster's department. He was accompanied by two soldiers. They met many wounded men returning from the front, most of them in carts, some on foot. At certain intervals Turkish prisoners with their dark skin drawn in wrinkles over their tired bones, passed by. The returning soldiers were a boisterous lot, and many fights took place among those who walked home and who were only slightly wounded.

Toward evening the road became deserted. The two soldiers had orders not

to stop until they had reached headquarters. From one side of the road came piercing shrieks. Grandfather wanted to investigate, but the soldiers reminded him of their orders. The shrieking continued, and soon he persuaded the soldiers to turn back for a few moments. All three jumped over the wide moat that ran on each side of the road. After passing a few trees they came into a great level meadow. Here the big, hairy man stopped a little longer and drew a deep breath as men do when they are about to dive. "Would I had been blind. They were boys from our town. Our boys. Two sons of decent people. Think!"

Someone knocked at the door and entered without being asked. It was Ioan Doina and his wife Garofa, one of the men who had made the trip with the cattle. Ioan turned to his wife and said: "Did I not tell you?" and then addressing grandmother, added: "For the last two months I have heard nothing else from this man. Day and night he talks of it. He does not sleep, he does not eat, he is going mad."

"They were our boys, boys from our village," said Cuna in half pleading, half threatening voice. Both men looked each other in the face, and there was silence. Ioan turned about, took his wife's sleeve, and edged his way out of the room. Cuna's wife followed slowly. Father and son, left alone, sat like two monuments for many hours. Some one knocked at the door, the son opened, and in came the two soldiers who had entertained the mother with their heroic tales. They greeted Cuna, who looked frightened, rose suddenly, and shouted to his son: "Take them out, take them out. Don't ever let them

touch my threshold again." The eldest son, with stiff steps and outstretched arms, like an advancing wall, saw them out. He followed only a few inches behind them, without touching their clothes.

WILLIAM SAPHIER.

BLUEBEARD

"Remember!" he repeated, menacingly. "All but the room with the green door!" With that, he left her.

She went at once to the room with the green door, and, with the aid of a hairpin, instantly opened it. Breathlessly, she tiptoed in.... The door gave onto a plainly furnished sitting-room; its only occupants an old mother cat and a lively litter of kittens.

After a moment of surprised silence: "Are they not cute!" she softly cried; and for the rest of the afternoon she played with them, like a child.

Thus occupied, her husband came upon her. His brow clouded.

"I have found you out!" she laughed into his frowning face. "Under that gruff exterior, under that curious mask, under those long blue whiskers, you conceal a kind heart... I have found you out!"

"So!" he cried, fiercely. "You are like the rest. Their fate shall be yours... Now that you know, these shall be given the run of the house. You have brought it upon yourself!"

He left her swooning.

After stepping on kittens unto the third and fourth generation, she took her life, terribly, behind the green door.

STEPHEN HUGUENOT.

The cards of life are so well stacked that when a player wins we attribute it to his skill.

AS MEN TURN TAILOR

As men for pastime may direct their wit
As they see fit
And thus turn tailor or green-groceryman
For their life's span—
As men turn tailor for their life's pastime,
I turn my hand to rhyme.

Poets be damn'd! if by that word be meant
Lean, shaggy devils who will pay no rent,
Belaboring the world because it still
Cares no two hoots in hell
For any dream
That they may deem
Fit subject for a canticle—
Lean, shiftless devils who have never yet
Earned silver with a decent sweat,
Yet deafen heaven with astounding cries,
Storming for pennies which the world denies.

Not mine to spin long garments of regret
In rhymes that fret,
And, when the night's too long,
Whimper a whining song
Not mine to draw aside
With sullen songs of pride
Because I dream the world has done me wrong.

As men turn tailor for their life's pastime,
I turn my hand to rhyme.
And whether the world cares
Or not, for my small wares
Makes very trifling difference to me.
With delicate, deft stitches
I fashion little breeches
For casual customers of my fantasy.

JOHN MCCLURE.

In Terms of Food

I can remember sitting stiffly, a very little boy, at the polished mahogany board in the high ancestral dining-room in Ware, surrounded by an atmosphere heavy with the dignity of viands.

My mother set what was called, in the aristocratic New England of that day, a "bountiful" table. Cousins and indigent satellites galore came to replenish their meagre systems with the red meats and roast poultry and, upon occasion, game; the rich brown gravies; the vegetables in heaped, buttered mounds; the thick, steaming soups and aldermanic puddings. There was always more than plenty; and over the daily feast presided my mother and grandmother, *grandes dames* of a long descent, with something of Chinese benignity and a fine appreciation of their own importance.

As a trencherman, my father had no standing. His abstemiousness was laid, in an apologetic manner, to an old dyspepsia—dyspepsia being one of the genteel diseases. It was incomprehensible to the ladies of his household, and to me as their small pupil, that he should eat but little, by intellectual preference.

My grandfather, a valid aristocrat, had a red face and many odd little gustatory tricks. He and his red-faced friends—one of whom owned a gold dinner-service presented by a Reigning Monarch—depended heavily on dining at the same hour every evening, and took their toddies solemnly at midday at a mellow old bar near the centre of the city. They thought long and much, I now understand, about their food and

liquor. Some of them died untimely deaths, from thinking too much about it.

My father was a self-made man—a fact never forgotten by his wife's family. His contempt for food (I now know) was regarded by them as evidence of low breeding. They endeavored to conceal that aspect of it, even from each other, but never with entire success. It was a skeleton, a lamentable fact ignored so far as possible by persons of gentle birth and cultivation.

I see again my father urging a second plateful of roast capon on my grandmother. He had the suavity of a Marquis de Caux, when he chose. No doubt it was a complete revenge for him for many slights, to see the proud old lady's greediness step to the front with sparkling eyes. But at that time I did not know. I thought it "queer" of him to be different. For breakfast he ate only one egg. Strange! My mother shrugged her shoulders—"Your father's way!" We all shrugged our shoulders more or less, from my grandmother to the last, most indigent cousin.

But with care; for my father was not only the source of supplies, but owner of a wit that nicked the hide where it struck.

I was allowed to have my own whims about food, provided that I ate enough. I liked fried potatoes better than mashed; "loved" waffles, "hated" egg-plant. One sometimes heard:

"Oh, don't have stewed corn. Stevie likes it on the cob!"

It is possible that if I had not been

jolted from the nest at an early age, I too would have grown up an aristocrat.

I cannot tell exactly at what period of my life the importance of food began definitely to recede. I must have eaten heavily at boarding-school, but never, I am sure, so thoroughly to the exclusion of other activities as modern writers of school stories would persuade us is the hobbledehoy habit.

I remember Sweet-Potato Minnie, ladler-out of helpings at the House on the Hill; Chatham's Jelly Lunch; and of later date, The Agate, where Muriel the Beautiful Scandinavian held forth to the titillation of adolescent yearnings. It seems to me, however, as I look back, that I leaned more heartily toward raw whiskey, at that stage of development, than toward any special kind of food.

Tante Manhattan would have taught me catholicity in appetite, if I had not learned before. In those days (1903-1904) there was an eating-place on 23rd Street at which one could buy dinner for twenty cents. They served what they could for the price, and one ate it and was thankful, or left it and starved. It was not so coarse or dirty as food I had eaten on cattle-ships, nor so good as that at which sons of ill-to-do parents had scoffed in the College Commons. It merely served its purpose; one does not scorn boiled beets if they will fill an aching void.

At what meals have I assisted since then, without paying separate homage to the food itself, its delicacy or variety!

There was the dinner at Antoine's, beginning with the unique cocktails and proceeding, through the marvellous smoky oysters and I have forgotten

what besides, to repletion and the inspired exclamation of Fleurette the Fair, as that frail one lifted humid eyes to mine:

"Oh, Gregory, how good that was!"

In a second she had corrected herself, but the error was incontestable—she had said Gregory instead of Stephen, and Gregory was a thousand miles away from New Orleans.

Often with Fleurette there was a sense of eating in the presence of a squad of other men and women, her by-gone friends and mine. After a silence we looked up and met each other's eyes, and in the merging gazes old memories were afloat. Our glances fell in embarrassment while we made hurried conversation anent the probable favorite in the next day's fourth race.

Nevertheless, I sat pleasantly at table many times with her. Remembrance clings of little tricks, pleasantries of a languid woman versed in love. The soft eyes, with speculative treachery always lurking in their depths, the long hands, fashioned to be caressed, but robbed of character by the fervid clasping of too many men! A beautiful woman with a vapid smile, foolish, unfortunate; cursed with a vein of moral feeling too strong to let her be entirely unmoral, and an unmoral nature too weak to engulf the moral vein.

Her tricks linger, but the food is forgotten—my privilege! Good chickens, and one bad one, at the Louisianne... We did not like the Sazerac, an acquired taste; and I thought that the fizzes of Ramos overrated... Adieu, Fleurette. Good luck, good appetite, good hunting! (I wonder if you betrayed your temper to the young aviator, down there in New Mexico. You

wouldn't like frijoles much, I imagine.)

At Counterfeiter's Castle above Quaramaug, they used to serve a gorgeous dinner, after the sun went down behind the pines across the lake. Most of the dishes I cannot recall—a specialty was grenouilles—but the liquid refreshments were beyond cavil. Persons of all kinds met there: the fat female fancier of Griffons, the dramatic professor's wife (on the sly), Toinette L'Anson's husband and indestructible mother, and that naval pill-peddler who wrote back from France to his wife to keep his memory green if he was killed in battle for his country.

Ostensibly the place was a kennels. Hemming, the smug proprietor, wore boots and sometimes joined the general conversation. Once when he was sitting at the table, Lil Kennedy, very drunk, described at length her strain of bird-hunting bull terriers, and the company went mad. He thought the insult an intentional one—you should have seen his purple face... On the east veranda of the Castle, where steps went down to the canoes, Dolores Costa tried to murder me with a Burgundy bottle, and did thereby convince me of the vitality of one of Turgenieff's types, previously unreal to me... Sometime, actions of living women may persuade me of the possible reality of Galsworthy's—to descend from the heights to mediocrity in a single penful.

The Kennedy is now mad; the Costa, repatriate. Little Flower o' the Corn, the life of the party, who used to dance most generously upon the table-top—ah, the poetry of her silken legs!—while dawn came stealing up the valley, has maried a man to whom she confessed her past, and gone to swallow

peas and mutton in Brooklyn. She who drove a team of seven, including two soldiers, with gay insouciance, now doubtless worries about a broken saucedish... The doggy Hemming overreached himself at last, and probably the grenouilles are honking undisturbed in Quaramaug.

The War, the tripe in the fashion of Caen, terrible stuff! There was a near-soldier from my native town, for whom I ordered mussels in Bordeaux, without his knowing what they were. They came, he saw, they conquered... "Schicoree." It was the only salad that they had, and after some Parisian days of it, one felt all curly. Simple Major Johnny Felton ate it at Papa Germain's, solemnly, nervously, thinking with longing of his plump wife at home, and giggling in abrupt falsetto when the French gels made eyes at him.

An interminable table d'hôte at the *Hotel du Grand Faisan* in Tours. Curse the waiter, will he never take away the soup? Would that they had sent all waiters early to the Front! But patience; he has been doing this for thousands of nights, his forbears before him and he, and will be doing it, he and his progeny, after we are dead. There is a fixity about waiters, especially the French, and particularly at the *Hotel du Grand Faisan*, that old, respectable hostelry, in the old, not-so-respectable city beside the rushing Loire. Always the guests complain, and come again—the same complaints, the same guests, the same waiters, the same hotel. It is the Gallic genius of Habit, persistent as death itself... *Les Américans*, the gawks, are only incidents.

Always the same rigmarole at Tours, early in the morning. Scene: the little

tin bar in the curve of the arm of the Place du Palais. Enter Yankee savior, to native mopping bar.

"D'cone-yack ,veet! Ke zhay swof c'mattang!"

"Pardon, m'sieu, pas de cognac, c'est defendu, vous le savez bien."

"Ah, ah, n'mockay par, goddam! D'cone-yack, zhe voo pree, tood sweet, mantenong, oray voo?"

Three cognacs, and then *des oeufs sur le plat* at Madame Cinquante's, with frightful coffee. At noon, a wonderful *dejeuner* in the dining-room of Madame Lefebvre's pension bourgeois—wonderful, until *les officiers Américains* troup'd in en masse and wrecked the pension.

Jeanne was the waitress, an altruist, very thin, small, tired in body, but smiling. She was to be married, no one seemed to know why, except that it had been arranged. Her grey eyes were kind and cool, too fine for marriage with a lout. It was like soaking sweet peas in a barrel of sack... Dinner on the Rue Nationale, usually, and a kettle of Vouvray... Angry foam under *Espagne's* bows; boards on the table-edges; and draw poker in the second smoking-room, against Bull Snyder and five morons, while the lights sway. We leave the War behind us before we touch America, where it never existed.

Fraternal banquets in New England, served by grim daughters of the Star admitted to the precincts for the purpose. Ice cream and large soft cake, with orange filling oozing from between the layers. Night upon night, descendants of the Pilgrims in rural New England swallow that layer cake, with no

variety save in the color and in the flavor of the filling...

A quack persuaded me to live for a year on milk and nuts and grass. It can be done; and after the adventure, one never returns completely to the former attitude toward food.

I understand perfectly, now, my father's single egg. Though I no longer practice the doctrines of quackery—on the contrary, Tante Manhattan's flesh-pots make a brisk appeal to me—I have the safe, comfortable feeling of the man to whom pertains the buried ace. It will never be said of me truthfully, as I once heard an eminent pastor declare of a confrere, defunct:

"He dug his grave with his teeth."

I can take it or let it alone—rich food, I mean. And consider how many cannot! Gaze with me at the patrons of a well-known restaurant, behold them in terms of food. Perchance you have not noticed how much their fodder means to them.

Those four males—I will not call them men—at yonder table, for example. What elbow-play; and their very hides are stretched with gluttony. Sometimes I think the celebrated dismissals of the Human Race by Swift and Balfour are too weak, the mere pratings of incorrigible optimists... And that high-colored female with the aged rake. She has told him that his lack of consideration spoils her lunch, that her appetite is gone; and she is pursuing vol-au-vents of sweetbread with artichoke and hollandaise, and a huge pear Condé . . . The quaint mixed foursome in the corner grows riotous. The waiter has chilled the wine too much, and forgotten to give Alfred a

fork. Alfred is stuffed like a force-fed fowl, his eye is dull, his fat hand flabby, his liver will deal him the death-blow soon; but he must have his fork when he wants it, poor laddie. Mabel's arms are like special Hoch-Deutsch sausages in shiny skins. The bracelet that George gave her two Christmases ago bites shrewdly into the gross flesh.

Heart of my Heart, I love you—deal me some more prune whip. Kiss me again, my dearest, and do you think our venison hangs tender on the butcher's hook by now?... T. Shandy's mother and the familiar clock.

Doubtless competent second-rate

novelists of the Sienkiewicz-Blasco Ibanez order will continue to shock us, between meals, with chapters on orgies of flamingo-tongues. Petronius was a dissolute dog, and the Romans generally in Spain and elsewhere were decadent fellows. But our own civilization is aging, and human nature remains the same. How long will it be, one queries, before we are compelled to acknowledge a condition in which, in the face of an all-conquering invading army, we would sacrifice, for immunitv, all except palates?

I bow.

STEPHEN TA VAN.

ELECTROCUTION

A foam of lightning breaks on the barred pane.
He shudders: *voltage.....stretches you apart*
As it does bleeding roots, and trunks that start
And twist alive and writhe up off the plain
Like threads of tortured silver..... But the guards—
Monstrous deaf dolls that move as on a string—
In wonted haste to finish with this thing,
Turn faces blankest than asphalted yards.

They hear the shriek that tore out of its sheath
But as a feeble moan... yet dare not breathe,
Who stare there at him, arching—like a tree
When the winds wrench it and the earth holds tight—
To fuse in flaming circuit with the night
His soul, expanding with white agony.

LOLA RIDGE.

BAGATELLE

A PLAY IN ONE ACT.

“..... et le comble de la finesse était de se surprendre l'un ou l'autre à recevoir une bagatelle sans prononcer le mot sacramental.”—Balzac.

Persons: Shabiyah, *The Gazelle*.

Kasim, *The Philosopher*.

Faroun, *The Husband*.

Scene: The interior of an Arab's tent on the edge of the desert. At the spectator's right is a divan composed of saddle-bags, carpets and pillows. At his right, a large chest. A mirror of burnished copper hangs on the tent wall back of chest. The only entrance and exit is a door, at center rear, screened by a flap of the tent so that it cuts off from the interior the glare of the sun.

As the curtain rises, SHABIYAH is seated cross-legged on the divan, playing a lute. She puts down the lute, yawns, listens, and hearing someone, goes to back of tent to look out.

SHABIYAH

(*Seeing someone, after a pause speaks*)

In Allah's name, wilt thou not rest in the shade?

KASIM

(*In the doorway*).

There is no God but Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful! I came hither because of the palm-tree.

SHABIYAH

This tent has spread itself in the shadow of the palm tree. Rest in its shade.

KASIM

(*Following her into tent*)

I hear and obey.

SHABIYAH

Tell me, O youth, what is thy name?

KASIM

My name is Kasim.

SHABIYAH

O Kasim, rest on these carpets.

(*She brings a basin and ewer of copper and pours water over his hands*).

SHABIYAH

(*Placing before him a tray containing a dish of fresh dates and a vessel of milk and a cup*)

O Kasim, eat of these fruits for we have no other meat, and fear nothing from me.

(*Kasim eats. He then washes his hands and mouth in the same manner as before but more thoroughly.*)

SHABIYAH

Now thou hast eaten, O Kasim, tell me whence thou art and how camest thou hither.

KASIM

O damsel. . . .

SHABIYAH

Thou mayest call me Shabiyah.

KASIM

O Shabiyah, know that I am of the city of Cairo and that I am travelling toward Bagdad with a company of merchants who have halted not far from this place.

SHABIYAH

Thou art a merchant?

KASIM

I am a philosopher.

SHABIYAH

By Allah, thou art young for a philosopher!

KASIM

Indeed, I am no ordinary philosopher.

SHABIYAH

What marvel is this!

KASIM

Know, O Shabiyah, that of philosophers there are two kinds; ordinary philosophers, who are frequently bold and always tedious; and extraordinary philosophers, whose wisdom is the flower of observation and the fruit of experience. (*He draws from his vest a book which he reads.*)

(Pause).

SHABIYAH

Thy book—O philosopher of the age—since it appears the sole object worthy of attention; permit me to ask the name of the science it treats?

KASIM

This book is beyond the understanding of women.

(*Pause, during which Kasim reads while Shabiyah watches him from under her eyelashes.*)

SHABIYAH

My husband is away.

KASIM

Thy husband . . .

SHABIYAH

Faroun . . . He is gone to the bazaar.

KASIM

(*Neglecting his book.*)

Ah!

SHABIYAH

He is buying a gold chain.

KASIM

Buys he this chain for thee, O gazelle?

SHABIYAH

Yes and no. It will be mine only if I win it from him at Bagatelle.

KASIM

Bagatelle?

SHABIYAH

Bagatelle. Thou hast never played it?

KASIM

No.

SHABIYAH

O Kasim, it is a game played for a forfeit. The players are two; the forfeit whatever they agree on. My Faroun and I have agreed to play for a gold chain.

KASIM

How does one play this game?

SHABIYAH

To win the forfeit—one must surprise whomever one is playing with, into accepting a key, a flower, a book—some bagatelle!—without that other saying the word “bagatelle.”

KASIM

Shall we play Bagatelle?

SHABIYAH

Agreed; and for what forfeit?

KASIM

Do thou name it.

SHABIYAH

The ruby on thy finger.

KASIM

This ring? (*holding it up.*)

SHABIYAH

In the name of Allah, yes.

KASIM

I would not part with it for a thousand dirhams.

SHABIYAH

Has it a history?

KASIM

This ring was given me by a most beautiful and wise lady, with the words “O Kasim, I have taught thee all I know; there is nothing more we can teach thee.”

SHABIYAH

Allah is all-knowing. Let us play for the ring?

KASIM

So be it.

SHABIYAH

It is agreed; and Allah is my witness. O Kasim, remember—Take nothing at my hand without at the same time saying the all-important word . . .

KASIM

Not even a kiss? (*He kisses her hand, exclaiming Bagatelle!*)

SHABIYAH

(Laughing)

Thou hast learned but the half of thy lesson, seeing that a kiss is not a bagatelle . . . (*Affecting surprise.*) But tell me? . . . Thou art no longer reading!

KASIM

I was distracted by thy beauty and grace.

SHABIYAH

Needs must thou tell me of this book? Verily my patience is at an end on thy account.

KASIM

(Drawing a deep breath)

I am the author of this work but the subject matter is not of mine invention—It is a collection of all the tricks, rouqueries, ruses and wiles that women have invented and of which they are capable.

SHABIYAH

What! . . . All? . . .

KASIM

Yes. . . . All.

SHABIYAH

And is thy book the flower of observation?

KASIM

It is even so.

SHABIYAH

And the fruit of thine own experience?

KASIM

Thou hast said it.

SHABIYAH

Hast thou forgotten the whole or a part of thy wisdom?

KASIM

How so?

SHABIYAH

Why wast thou reading, then?

KASIM

To avoid temptation.

SHABIYAH

And now?

KASIM

I seek thy beauty and grace for thy face beams with light, thy cheeks are rose-red and thine eyelids langorous.

SHABIYAH

(Slyly).

Hast thou no fear that I play thee a trick *not* in thy collection?

KASIM

No, for through the constant study of women I have arrived at a state where I no longer fear them.

SHABIYAH

Ah . . .

(Pause.)

SHABIYAH

Philosopher of the age?

KASIM

What wouldest thou, garden of delights?

SHABIYAH

O Kasim, I would have thee abide with me a while that thou mayest tell me thy history and acquaint me with the rare adventures that have come to thy knowledge . . .

KASIM

What? All!

SHABIYAH

Yes . . . All.

KASIM

So be it. But, ere I begin. I will enact an adventure . . .

SHABIYAH

What tale is this?

KASIM

By Allah, my heart is well-nigh torn in sunder with longing for thee; nor will I let half the day pass ere I possess thee and take my fill of thy beauty and grace.

SHABIYAH

Bethink thee what thou wilt do.

KASIM

How so?

SHABIYAH

Belike it may come to my husband's ears, and who will deliver us from his hand . . .

KASIM

Is not thy husband at the bazaar?

SHABIYAH

Yes.

KASIM

How will he know of this? (He kisses her mouth.) Thy hair is like the nights of estrangement and separation and thy face like the days of union . . .

SHABIYAH

(Breaks from his embrace, sits upright, listens).

Didst thou not hear?

KASIM

What?

(She goes to door of tent and listens.)

SHABIYAH

(Startled).

It is his horse! My husband will be here in a moment!

KASIM

(Jumps from divan. His book, unnoticed, falling to floor right of divan).

SHABIYAH

He is as jealous as a tiger and as pitiless. If Faroun find you here, he

will kill us both.

(Kasim starts for door.)

SHABIYAH

(Divining his intent).

Hasten not to destroy thyself. He will see thee . . . (with a flash of inspiration.) The chest—there is nothing for it but that thou hide in the chest!

(Kasim hesitates.)

SHABIYAH

Art thou afraid?

KASIM

Yes.

SHABIYAH

By Allah and if thou valuest thy life, quick, hide in this chest.

KASIM

(Getting into chest)

I commit my affair unto Allah for no one can avoid what he hath decreed.

SHABIYAH

(Locks chest with key which she attaches again to her girdle; glances around the tent and sees the book).

SHABIYAH

(Shoving the book under the divan with her foot).

And it be the will of Allah, I will show thee a trick not in thy book!

(She adds Kohl to her eyelids and a little more red to her lips, and is ready, a few seconds later, to receive, with a thousand blandishments, Faroun, who enters).

SHABIYAH

O my Lord and light of mine eyes . . .

FAROUN

(Fondling her).

Gazelle.

SHABIYAH

Blessed be Allah and his Prophet, thou art returned sooner than I expected.

FAROUN

Gazelle, I had not come but out of longing for the sight of thy face, for I must again to the bazaar on a matter of business (*sits on divan*).

SHABIYAH

Wilt thou partake of some refreshment?

FAROUN

What is there?

SHABIYAH

Dates and milk.

FAROUN

I am not hungry. I will smoke my nargileh.

(*Faroun proceeds to smoke the nargileh while Shabiyah seats herself on a cushion not far from his feet*).

FAROUN

Tell me, gazelle, how hast thou passed the time during mine absence!

SHABIYAH

(*Fervently*).

There is no power and no virtue but in Allah, the most high, the Sublime?

...

FAROUN

Hast thou some rare story to tell me or some marvel to make known to me?

SHABIYAH

(*Quietly and with perfect self-possession*).

There is nothing for it but that I tell thee the whole truth, hiding naught of a singular adventure that befell me . . .

FAROUN

I am listening, my gazelle.

SHABIYAH

There came here a kind of philosopher, who claims that he has collected into a book all the tricks, rogueries, ruses and wiles that women have invented and of which they are capable . . .

FAROUN

I am listening.

SHABIYAH

And this philosopher is a goodly youth with shining face and slender shape, black eyes and joined eyebrows . . .

FAROUN

Go on, I am listening . . .

SHABIYAH

(*With animation*).

He was ardent, impetuous—he threw his arms about me, and . . .

FAROUN

(*Terrible*)—And?

SHABIYAH

Thou camest in time to save my faltering virtue.

FAROUN

(*Bounds from the divan, a long knife in his hand. Shabiyah falls at his feet*).

FAROUN

(*Taking her by the hair*).

Where is this dog? Produce him to my sight!

SHABIYAH

(*Embracing his knees*).

Thou wilt not kill me?

FAROUN

(*Threatening her with the knife*).

By Allah, if thou wouldest live, speak—where is this dog?

SHABIYAH

(*With a glance as prompt as it is timid*)

The chest.

FAROUN

(*Taking a stride toward the chest*).

Ah! . . .

SHABIYAH

(*Proffering the key, her eyes downcast*).

It is locked . . .

FAROUN

(*Snatches the key from her hand; runs toward the chest and is on the*

point of inserting the key in the lock when he is stopped by an explosion of laughter from Shabiyah).

SHABIYAH

(Swaying with delight).

The chain, the chain! Give me the gold chain! Thou hast forgotten the bagatelle thou snatched from me! . . .

(The key drops to the floor.)

FAROUN

By the heart of the Prophet! . . .

SHABIYAH

Thou hast lost thy chain. O Faroun, give it me. Have I not won it?

FAROUN

Thou hast indeed won it *(He goes toward her with the chain, his knife no longer visible)*.. O subtlest of gazelles, here is thy chain. Another time, play no such cruel trick . . .

SHABIYAH

(Taking the chain)

My Faroun, it is not easy to catch thee; thou hast usually a better memory . . .

FAROUN

Play me no such trick again, and I will bring thee the wealth of all the caravans that pass in a year. *(He starts to go).*

SHABIYAH

(Arranging her hair before the mirror.)

What, art thou leaving?

FAROUN

Yes.

SHABIYAH

O my husband, let this suffice thee of ignoble suspicion and never again deem ill of me.

FAROUN

So be it.

SHABIYAH

(Approaching him).

Accord me pardon for what is past.

FAROUN

Allah grant thee grace!

SHABIYAH

Be absent but a little while, O Faroun for I cannot endure to be parted from thee even for an hour.

(Faroun goes).

SHABIYAH

(Listens to make sure that he is gone; then, picking up the key, she unlocks and opens the chest).

(Kasim's head and shoulders appear. He is pale and trembling).

SHABIYAH

(In a whisper).

He is gone . . .

KASIM

(Getting out of chest).

Ah.

SHABIYAH

Praised be Allah who hath made the affair to end well; and we implore the Almighty to crown his favors with thy safe faring forth this place.

KASIM

Is the way clear?

SHABIYAH

Yes.

KASIM

(Starting to go).

Farewell.

SHABIYAH

What, art thou going too?

KASIM

(In a flutter to be gone).

By Allah, yes.

(He has reached the door when he stops.)

SHABIYAH

Thy book—delay a little—thou hast forgotten thy book!

KASIM

(Feeling in his vest).

Ah *(Coming toward her).* Give it

me that I may go my way, for I will no longer in this place.

SHABIYAH

I hear and obey.

(*Shabiyah gets the book from under the divan. Kasim snatches it eagerly from her hands and starts for the door.*)

SHABIYAH

Stay, in the name of Allah, there is something else! . . .

KASIM

(*Startled.*)

What?

SHABIYAH

Thou hast forgotten we are playing Bagatelle.

Did I not warn thee—"Take nothing from my hand without at the same time saying the all-important word."

KASIM

In the name of Allah . . .

SHABIYAH

The ruby—the ruby on thy finger. Thou promised it and Allah is witness of what I say.

KASIM

I promised no less a forfeit; therefore, it is thine. (*Drawing it from his finger.*) Here . . . take it.

SHABIYAH

(*Taking the ring.*)

How beautiful it is—it will remind me of thee! Wilt thou not stay?

KASIM

No.

SHABIYAH

Art thou afraid?

KASIM

I mistrust thee.

SHABIYAH

Come, tell me, how dost thou like my chain?

KASIM

Would I had never seen thee.

SHABIYAH

O Kasim, have I played thee a trick not in thy book?

KASIM

One glance at thee has cost me a thousand sighs for indeed thou hast ravished my wit. Farewell.

SHABIYAH

Delay a little. My Faroun is away for hours at a time and there is seldom here a philosopher to delight mine ears. Wilt thou not stay?

KASIM

Why should I?

SHABIYAH

Stay and see. I will give thee thy ring again.

KASIM

Not for the ruby together with thy gold chain would I stay . . .

SHABIYAH

I will give thee a kiss.

KASIM

Not even a kiss. Farewell . . .

SHABIYAH

Philosopher of the age?

KASIM

(*Turning at door.*)

What wouldst thou now of me?

SHABIYAH

Forget not to include this Bagatelle in thy collection.

(*Kasim goes.*)

CURTAIN.

LOUIS GILMORE.

All the thoughts of a turtle are turtle.
—Emerson.

Dowson and The Catholic Note in The Nineties

"Whom the Gods love, Death does not cleave
nor smite,
But like an angel with soft trailing wing,
He gathers them upon the hush of night
With voice and beckoning."

MEAGRE and for the most part unsympathetic, have been the various critiques and accounts of Ernest Dowson, severally dubbed the Chopin of Poetry and the Burns of the Nineties.

Of the facts of his life we are told little. He was born at Kent, England, on August 2, 1867. His great-uncle was Alfred Domett, Browning's "Waring," and himself a poet. His father had a taste for literature and lived for some time in France and on the Riviera because of poor health, Ernest being rather irregularly educated in France and thereabouts until what time he entered Queen's College, Oxford. Leaving this institution of learning in 1887 without taking a degree, he came to London and lived there intermittently several years, between visits to France, the country of his heart. The last years of his short life were spent almost entirely in Paris, Brittany and Normandy, though he died at a bricklayer's cottage in the village of Catford, England. His body was buried in the Catholic section of the Lewisham cemetery, on February 27, 1900. His delicate, wistful spirit still lives, for us, in his work.

Dowson was an early convert to the Catholic Church. But because of the inconsistency of certain of his actions

with his ideals, has been accused by more than one writer of toying with his religion or as being, rather, intoxicated with its artistic side, drunk with incense, chrisms and candles.

Such, however, is the spleen of the iconoclast. It is not given every man to live up to his ideal. The best most of us can do is not to give over altogether to the ways of the world. Wordsworth's cry "The world is too much with us!" obtains in 1920 as it did in 1820 and in 1890. "Late and soon, getting and spending, we lay waste our powers." There was little of "getting and spending," however, in poor Dowson's life, but much indeed of a laying waste of powers. Therein lay his, as many another man's mischief.

That which has been generally conceded his most admirable lyric is the "Non Sum Qualis Eram Sub Bonae Regno Cynarae."

Last night, ah, yesternight, betwixt her lips
and mine
There fell thy shadow, Cynara! thy breath
was shed
Upon my soul between the kisses and the wine;
And I was desolate 'and sick of an old passion,
Yea, I was desolate and bowed my head:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara, in my
fashion.

All night upon mine heart I felt her warm
heart beat,
Night-long within mine arms in love and sleep
she lay;
Surely the kisses of her bought red mouth
were sweet;
But I was desolate and sick of an old passion,
When I awoke and found the dawn was gray:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara, in my
fashion.

I have forgot much, Cynara, gone with the
wind,

Flung roses, roses riotously with the throng,
Dancing, to put thy pale, lost lilies out of mind;
But I was desolate and sick of an old passion,
Yea, all the time, because the dance was
long:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara, in my
fashion.

I cried for madder music and for stronger
wine,
But when the feast is finished and the lamps
expire,
Then falls thy shadow, Cynara! the night is
thine:
And I am desolate and sick of an old passion,
Yea, hungry for the lips of my desire:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara in my
fashion.

Here, as Arthur Symons has it: "He has for once said everything, and he has said it to an intoxicating and immortal music." This poem has a grace, rhythm and an individuality unsurpassed by the poetry of the period, yet scattered about Dowson's work are numerous lesser lyrics which judged by one's individual reaction towards them perhaps excel the better known piece. Witness this little gem:

EXTREME UNCTION.

"Upon the eyes, the lips, the feet,
On all the passages of sense,
The atoning oil is spread with sweet
Renewal of lost innocence.

The feet, that lately ran so fast
To meet desire, are soothly sealed;
The eyes that were so often cast
On vanity, are touched and healed.

From troubrous sights and sounds set free;
In such a twilight hour of breath
Shall one retrace his life, or see
Through shadows, the true face of death?

Vials of mercy! Sacring oils.
I know not where nor when I come,
Nor through what wanderings and toils,
To crave of you Viaticum.

Yet, when the walls of flesh grow weak,
In such an hour, it well may be,
Through mist and darkness, light will break,
And each anointed sense will see."

Everard Meynell in his biography of Francis Thompson writes: "What English artist for fifty years has made a

Madonna and Child? Aubrey Beardsley made one. What poet has sung of the last sacraments? Ernest Dowson's most beautiful verses are on the Extreme Unction." It might not be amiss to indicate here that Dowson was but one of a group of young artists who embraced Catholicism during the Eighteen-Nineties. Katherine Breyg, in the *Catholic World* states that: "Not at the height of the Oxford Movement was Rome more regnant of artistic and literary England than during these curious early Nineties." Indeed, the most prominent figures of the decade, Beardsley, Dowson, Lionel Johnson, Francis Thompson, Mrs. Meynell, Henry Harland, Simeon Solomon and Oscar Wilde, were, or became, Catholics. With the exception of Mrs. Meynell, who still lives, all of these artists died comparatively young and for the most part as the result of a general taint in the atmosphere of the time. A certain dungy, over-ripe excrescence, as it were, pervading men and manners. Indeed, "*Fin de Siecle*!" Looking at it from the vantage point of today, pre-war fermentation.

It has been our pleasure to have made somewhat of a study of this unique and interesting period in English literature. We first became attracted towards its quaint bizarries through the swift, suicidal temper of its genius. There was something psychologically strange about the deliberate way with which these young men rushed into the flames of a fire they had builded with their own hands. Even as star-desirous moths, wing-weary from seeking the greater light, submit to the lure of the candle, so now did these, feeling themselves not strong enough to attain to the star of

Beauty, accept in lieu the candle of her distorted sister, Artificiality.

Aubrey Beardsley perhaps illustrates this more than any other. To him had been given such genius and technique as to have called forth the opinion that he was the greatest black and white artist since Albrecht Durer. What wasted talents were his, he himself recognized on his death bed, renouncing all that bizarre, sensuous, cryptic work which had so brought him before the public eye. But, as Edmund Spenser remains the poet's poet, will Aubrey Beardsley remain the artist's artist. His technique is superb.

In this matter of technique, Dowson also excels, being by far the truest and most finished singer of his day. A singer, who, in very truth, has given a voice to silence. A lyric of his with its beautiful heading: "O Mors! Quam Amara Est Memoria Tua Homini Pacem Habantis In Substantiis Suis—

Exceeding sorrow
Consumeth my sad heart!
Because tomorrow
We must depart,
Now is exceeding sorrow
All my part!

Give over playing,
Cast thy viol away;
Merely laying
Thine head my way:
Prithee, give over playing,
Grave or gay.

Be no word spoken;
Weep nothing; let a pale
Silence, unbroken
Silence prevail!
Prithee, be no word spoken
Lest I fail!

Forget tomorrow!
Weep nothing; only lay
In silent sorrow
Thine head my way:
Let us forget tomorrow,
This one day!

A lyric like this, as Symons says: "Languid, half inarticulate, coming

from the heart of a drowsy sorrow" could hardly have been produced at any other time than during this self-conscious, effete period.

Dowson was more Latin than French in his affinities. Notwithstanding numerous translations from the French in both verse and prose, his art is distinctly Latin, almost Horatian in its nicety. Observe the indefinable sense of quiet and wistfulness found in this poem:

NUNS OF THE PERPETUAL ADORATION

Calm, sad, secure; behind high convent walls
These watch the sacred lamp, these watch
and pray:

And it is one with them when evening falls,
And one with them the cold return of day.

These heed not time; their nights and days
they make

Into a long, returning rosary,
Whereon their lives are threaded for Christ's
sake;
Meekness and vigilance and chastity.

A vowed patrol, in silent companies,
Life-long they keep before the living Christ
In the dim church, their prayers and penances
Are fragrant incense to the Sacrificed.

Outside, the world is wild and passionate;
Man's weary laughter and his sick despair
Entreat at their impenetrable gate:
They heed no voices in their dream of prayer.

They saw the glory of the world displayed;
They saw the bitter of it, and the sweet;
They knew the roses of the world should fade,
And be trod under by the hurrying feet.

Therefore they rather put away desire,
And crossed their hands and came to
sanctuary
And veiled their heads and put on coarse attire,
Because their comeliness was vanity.

And there they rest; they have serene insight
Of the illuminating dawn to be:
Mary's sweet star dispels for them the night,
The proper darkness of humanity.

Calm, sad, secure; with faces worn and mild:
Surely their choice of vigil is the best?
Yea! for our roses fade, the world is wild;
But there, beside the altar, there is rest.

In concluding, we glean from a little brochure long out of print, Blaikie-

Murdoch's "Renaissance of the Nineties," the following paragraph: "In the matter of human interest, the *rosa rosarum* of all the nineties is the poet, Ernest Dowson. It is strange how little justice has been given to this singer. Encyclopedists heed him not, while the Athenaeum, writing of him during his lifetime, said he 'cribs from Swinburne,' declared that his poems 'are artificial, and there is from beginning to end no new idea,' and concluded: 'Mr. Dowson knows the language fairly well if only he had something to say.' This criticism is superficial and stupid, for in general tone Dowson is far from akin to Swinburne, and his likeness to him lies only in a taste on the younger poet's part for double rhymes, and for the use of a long line. And as to the poet having no new idea, that is a merit; for poetry, as Keats writes, 'should surprise by a fine excess, and not by singularity; it should strike the reader as a wording of his own highest thoughts, and appear almost a remembrance.' Now that, exactly, is what Dowson's best poems do. They are always natural, being sometimes like laughter, more often like tears.

And far from having nothing to say, the poet had everything to say; for he sang again and again the song of pure human feeling."

What more can be asked of a poet, but that his poems be "natural, sometimes like laughter, more often like tears?" Does not one turn to poetry, as one might to religion, in time of travail and sorrow, seeking therefrom that solace which is neither in work nor in play, and glimpsing therein the very visage of his soul?

"They are not long, the weeping and the laughter,
Love and desire and hate;
I think they have no portion in us after
We pass the gate.

They are not long, the days of wine and roses:
Out of a misty dream
Our path emerges for a while, then closes
Within a dream."

GUY SEVERIN.

Note—The lines which prelude this paper are taken from, at this writing, an uncollected poem of Dowson's "The Passing of Tennyson"; those which bring it to a close form the envoy to his first volume "Poems" and bear the heading: "Vitae summa brevis spem nos vetat incohare longam."

THE ALIEN RACE

There was a flowering tree that glowed lilac against the twilight—a thing of beauty as perfect and as glamorous, on summer nights, as the new moon or a star.

"I wonder," said my Companion, as we halted before it, "if there was ever a race of men who worshipped Beauty as a god, raising their altars casually but reverently wherever they encountered her—before a flower, or before a crystal pool, or before such a tree as this, here, opening its blossoms to the moon."

Tales of the Psychometric Reporter

NO. 2 DIOGENES ON LANDLORDS

Charles Benson, a reporter on the "Chronicle," accidentally discovers that he possesses psychometric powers—that is, the ability to compel famous men and women in History to appear before him, provided he can hold in his hands some object that was connected with them when they were on earth. He obtained his first interview for his paper with Bacchus.

I RETURNED to the office of "*The Chronicle*" with my interview with Bacchus.

The Chief gasped after reading it and rolled out of his psychic garage.

"To tell you the truth, Benson," he said, "when I sent you out to interview Bacchus I meant to freeze you out. But you've got the greatest beat that any paper ever got in this town. Your psychometrical powers have beaten me. I know when I ought to make good. I'll appoint you Psychometric Reporter of *The Chronicle*, double your wages, give you a contract for two years, and put you down on the private bonus list."

I used to sit on the edge of the chair when talking to the Chief. Now I sank into it like a man who has come to stay, lifted a Perfecto from his private box, and spread out my legs at full length so that he could see the soles of my shoes, on one of which was printed Excelsior! and the other Eureka! I was human, and just felt like rubbing it in a little.

"Now," I said, flipping my ashes on his best office rug, "what do you think of an interview with Diogenes on landlords?"

"You mean the guy that lived in a tub and went around with a lantern looking for an honest man?"

"The same," I said. "He was the

first civilized man to solve the housing problem, the heat problem in winter and the electric fan problem in summer. He beat all the landlords in Greece, and was the only man they were afraid of. He might throw a tremendous light on the landlord problem of today. He might give us all pointers.

"Go to it!" shouted the Chief, throwing all the poetry on his desk into the wastebasket. "As long as your psychometric powers hold out you've got *carte blanche*; besides, with these dead ones there can be no libel suit. And, by the way, Benson, you can use the office Ford whenever you want to."

I was off—in the Ford. But where could I "get in touch" with Diogenes?—for one gifted with psychometrical powers must get in touch, literally, with something intimate concerning the person to be interviewed.

I thought of all the tubs and lanterns I had ever seen, but did any of them connect up with Diogenes? Not one. Legend had it that he took up his residence in a tub belonging to the Temple of the Mother of the Gods, in Athens.

Bootleg Inn was in sight, and while I was trying to figure out how well I knew the bartender there a voice from the vacant seat alongside of me startled me with "Hello, Benson!"

A man with a Greek nose, a Russian pompadour, whiskers cut à la Bernard Shaw and an enormous diamond stickpin in the shape of a tub in his tie, sat there grinning at me.

I knew it was Diogenes instinctively, but how had he appeared without psychometric touch?

Diogenes seemed to read the question in my eye, for he said:

"Remember that little marble fountain down the road where you stopped, got off and took a drink of water? You remember you put your right hand on the marble basin while leaning over to drink? Well, that chunk of marble was originally in my tub in Athens—the same tub that I went to live in when I organized the first tenants' strike against profiteering landlords that the world has ever known.

"History is right, for once, for I pinched that tub from the Temple of the Mother of the Gods. It was Aphrodite's special laundry tub, for when she went earth-junketing she had to wear things. She never owed me a grudge for it, for she had been dispossessed so many swell apartment houses in Athens that she rather stood in with me in my attempt to settle the housing problem of that day."

I kept my "benzine tub" going at a slow spin up the Westchester Turnpike, and began to interview the man who was so completely independent of landlords that he had ordered Alexander the Great, the landlord of the earth, to stand out of the sunshine when the latter asked him what he could do for him.

"How did the great Tub Strike of Athens start, Diogenes?" I asked.

"Why, the householders demanded windows in their houses so that they could see the landlord coming on his monthly round. You see the houses occupied by the middle and lower classes at that time only had skylights in them. It was nothing to have a cat drop

through into your evening soup. For these and other reasons we demanded that the landlords hack windows in our dobies. They answered by doubling the rent, just as they do today when you notify the Board of Health that the wall-paper is beginning to move out.

"I took a tub, but the others who followed me soon deserted. They only had wooden tubs, while I have a sacred marble one, which I turned into a studio apartment. Some paid the new rent rates, while others bought tents and emigrated to the Asiatic deserts.

"As soon as I got fixed up in my tub I began an essay demonstrating that the landlord was the lowest form of animal intelligence then known on the planet. A gang of landlords got wind of my essay, and when I went abroad one night with my famous lantern so as to give my essay a sort of Uplift touch they Lusked my tub and confiscated the essay."

"You are not house-hunting at present, are you, Diogenes?" I asked.

"No," he replied, refreshing himself with a slug of old Athenian ale out of a bottle concealed in his lantern under his coat. "The only way to escape landlords is to become a ghost.

"My adventures on various planes proved to me one thing—that landlords themselves become ghosts."

"What do you mean—that they never die?"

"That's just it—landlords never die. Startling thought—eh? Well, did you ever have a landlord whose death you can remember? Did you ever know anybody who ever attended a landlord's funeral? No—of course not. Landlords, you see, are not men, individuals; they are a species, and a species has a

sort of immortality, although the individuals that compose a species may pass from sight.

"There are commonly said to be twelve signs of the Zodiac," continued Diogenes, philosophically, "but there are in reality thirteen. Landlords have throughout all time appeared in batches on the earth at the time this thirteenth sign is in the ascendant."

"What is the name of this thirteenth, or landlord, sign of the Zodiac?" I asked, dropping, unconsciously, into a Say-Mr.-Bones tone.

"Apartmentia," replied Diogenes. "It is a large conglomeration of stars just beyond the Bull—or Taurus, as it is called—which is shaped exactly like one of your twenty-five family apartment houses in New York. Every one born under this sign will be a landlord. Its reappearance each year—which is somewhere around May 1st in this clime—acts directly on the psychic organization of the sons of apartmentia like the waxing and waning of the moons on the tide.

"When Apartmentia is full right overhead all landlords put up their rents in a fury—they get profit-nutty. As Apartmentia fades late in the year into the limbo of the Bull their frenzy de-

creases and they tend to become gentle and human again—some even going as far as to buy new wallpaper for the tenants."

"Will tubs ever come back into fashion again, old man?"

"They may if evictions go on. But they will be modernized. Tub villages may spring into being, just as tent cities have. They will be roofed with waterproof canvas and be huge affairs with living compartments, little doors and windows, and castors so that you can roll around from place to place.

"There may even be in time dirigible tubs, hydro-tubs and balloon-tubs. A simple means, it seems to me, of solving your present housing woes.

"So long, Benson. If you ever spend a week-end in the Fourth Dimension run in to see me—I'm just over the line of the Third Dimension—Tub No. 13, to your left. Got some old Greek bitters stored there if you'd like to sample 'em."

He was gone. I was in Yonkers.

Looking at a big piece of canvas floating in the air almost the full length of a street, I read:

"VOTE FOR TUBINSKY, CANDIDATE OF OPPRESSED TENANTS."

Was that only a psychometric coincidence?

BENJAMIN DE CASSERES.

THE FILLE DE JOIE

There is on record in my acquaintance a *fille de joie* in a town in the West, who, dying, desired to be buried with her cheeks and brows painted for the occasion.

Verse

THOMAS KENNEDY

ALMOST ANY POET TO ONE PARTICULAR CHARMER.

My dear! you startle me; you speak of passion?
I look for that in maidens more Circassian,
More elemental, somewhat less reflecting,
Less given to Freudian psychical dissecting.

I can not picture you aflame, aquiver,
Eager to be an unreserving giver
Of body, mind and heart; you are too knowing—

Have memorized the way which you are going.

You sigh, exclaim, moan, wring your hands
and such—
What was it Shakespeare said?—"Protest too much."

Your faculties are all in perfect order;
No straggling impulse strays across the border.

Suppose I dared—I'd like to—love you madly,
Would you receive, and give like measure,
gladly,
Or, going home, write this within your journal:

"Captured a poet; loves me; how infernal!"

Your beauty tempts me, but I dare not dally.
I can not play at love with feint and sally.
To be a pin-stuck freak in your collection,
I have no mind; I fly in self-protection.

BLOSSOM TIME.

Wraiths of dead years make white the apple trees:

Poor ghosts of vanished beauty, which essay
Once more Life's dark adventure. Soon the breeze

Will end their dream and scatter them away.

Happy the tanager, who does not know,
Gay in the scarlet of his marriage dress,
That 'April, underneath her flaunting show
Of gladness, shapes new deaths for loveliness.

PAUL ELDRIDGE

UNTO ETERNITY!

Let us die in a rapturous embrace, beloved,
Let us be buried mouth to mouth,
That we may rot together,
And mingle in the maws of worms.
And grin with naked jaws and long teeth,
To one another, O beloved,
Remembering nothing.

IVORY TOWER.

I climb the tall hollowness of me
Until I reach the peak—
There I squat, my elbows on my knees,
And watch the stars, grown large as fists,
And the moon, a giant hoop
That acrobatic clouds try in vain to pierce.

Below me,
Rats and red worms gnaw my roots,
And the echo of their greedy teeth
Shiver the tall hollowness of me
Like the hard blows of a dull ax.

OSCAR WILLIAMS

RAIN.

All day and all the night the rain pours
Unending like the gray stream of the years;
And all the night the wind's voice is hoarse,
And a swift, thick sobbing chokes the earth;
O great deep heart of the universe,
What sorrow must be yours
That has so many tears!

Starrett's Chicago Letter

Slowly, one by one, as time moves on, the earth yields up its secret places; its mysteries fall before the restless search of man. Nothing is impossible; somewhere one's wildest dreams find their counterfeit realities; the mirage is but the reflection of something that exists some place beyond the immediate agony. Roraima surrenders its secret to the bold climber; a veil of ice is pierced, and the North Pole stands forth like any barber's standard; a child rummages in an attic, and a museum gains a priceless manuscript. An obscure destiny directs these things, no doubt. Certainly no particular objective lured me, last week, to an outlying section of Chicago, where there befel that which I have to communicate...

I have discovered the long-sought rhyme for "silver!"

There it was, over the door of a shop far out in West Madison Street, in letters more than a foot in height: H. F. W. SPILVER, DRUGGIST.

I need not press the importance of my discovery; it is obvious to all who play with rhyme. For as many years as poetry has been written in English, bards have torn their locks over the word "silver." Authors of textbooks have assured them that its harmonious twin does not exist. Yet Mr. Spilver, a charming fellow who sings bass in a local choir, has been a factor in affairs for, at least, fifty years; and the Spilvers before him go back for perhaps centuries!

Remains for attention one matter

only; the name must be immortalized so that it shall pass into the language. Let it become a synonym for apothecary. This should be easy, if poets will unite in the common cause.

The most interesting pieces of news I have heard within the month comes from Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh, and concerns a Chicago poet—Thomas Kennedy, instructor in English at that seat of learning. Mr. Kennedy's enthusiasm for the literature of the eighteen-nineties has resulted in a course covering that brilliant period, which is to be given in a series of ten lectures, next year. Mr. Kennedy and Prof. Haniel Long (H, not D), head of the English department, will alternate in the lecture, and a fascinating draft of the course already has been prepared. The *fin de siècle* renaissance (or decadence, if you please) in England, America, France and Germany adequately will be discussed despite the brevity of the course.

This is an important undertaking, and the Institute is to be congratulated on its enterprise and courage. The influences that flow from the men of the nineties are largely unacknowledged, but are all about us. The tendency to relegate the great figures of the French and English group to the limbo of minor sensationalists is passing. It is to be hoped that the movement at Carnegie will help to classicize the finer works of that extraordinary moment in literature, killed by the Boer war at the very

height of its flowering. Wilde's fame is secure, and so is Beardsley's; Machen and Davidson slowly are coming to the recognition they deserve; but, save by collectors, Crackanthorpe and Dowson and Middleton and the rest are forgotten.

For the first time, the American group will be considered in its relation to the world movement, and this feature alone deserves cheers. At last, Bierce and Frank Norris and Stephen Crane are to be admitted to the colleges; at least, that is one's hope.

—

An Oak Park (Ill.) clergyman, Dr. William E. Barton, has leapt into the limelight as the outstanding Lincoln authority. The results of his years of patient study and research are now being given publication. Last year Doran published "The Soul of Abraham Lincoln," an exhaustive study of Lincoln's religious beliefs, and now we have "The Paternity of Abraham Lincoln," in which Dr. Barton discusses the delicate subject of Lincoln's parentage, and lays a number of ghosts. The several furtive legends current about the paternity of Lincoln definitely are exploded, and with its predecessor the volume takes its place as a remarkable contribution to the extensive Lincoln literature of the nation.

Another notable essay in Lincolniana appears with the imprint of Walter M. Hill of Chicago—"The Assassination of Lincoln" by E. W. Coggeshall. In Mr. Coggeshall's monograph, the complete story of the conspiracy, and the fate of all the conspirators, is told for the first time. The edition is strictly limited.

To what degree, I wonder, does Lincoln literature interest the South? Recently, a friend told me of purchasing

a Lincoln autograph from a Southern bookseller for one dollar. The bookman, said my friend, knew it was worth more, and said so, but didn't care about having it around the place! I chose to believe that the instance was an exceptional one.

—

The business of reviving "Reedy's Mirror" goes forward merrily. The second number of "All's Well," edited by Charles J. Finger, Reedy's friend and former associate, has come from the press, and there is reason to believe its future is assured. The old St. Louis imprint is missing. In its place is the strangest imprint of its kind in modern journalism—Gayeta Lodge, Fayetteville, Ark. That is Finger's home; but he's not running the little paper off on a hand press. The importance of the journal to Chicago is this: if all goes well, its headquarters will be removed to this city, and we shall again have a literary paper worth reading that does not come from New York or New Orleans. Where Finger got his title—"All's Well"—heaven knows. Is it Browning or Shakespeare? That is part of the mystery.

—

Speaking of mystery: one other has been laid. Has the fame of Laura Blackburn reached New Orleans? Possibly not. Laura Blackburn, for years, has been a valued contributor to B. L. T.'s column of sense and nonsense in the *Chicago Tribune*. Her specialty has been dainty lyrics, remote little echoes of Keats and Shelley, but thoroughly feminine. Recently, the Bookfellows published Laura's lyrics in a book, and announced a public dinner at which Laura would be present. A throng of admirers turned out, including a num-

ber of extremely curious male persons who had been ravished by Laura's chaste passion... She was called upon to speak. Whereupon up rose the two hundred-odd pounds of Charles G. Blanden, and bowed without a simper. Charles G. Blanden is Laura Blackburn.

—
David G. Joyce, a Chicago collector, is the owner of a Stevenson fragment of more than passing interest. It is called "Diogenes at the Savile Club," and was intended by R. L. S. to form a chapter in a once-projected satirical work. Through Frank M. Morris, the antiquarian bookseller, the delightful trifle is to be privately printed in a limited edition, for the friends of Mr. Joyce. Doubtless Mr. Joyce will be astonished by the number of his friends.

—
Llewellyn Jones, literary editor of the *Evening Post*, now has taken the platform, the better to assail Amy Lowell and acclaim Walter de la Mare. Sandburg has been lecturing for some time. In both cases, women's clubs to date have been the chiefest gainers. The combination on one platform would be exhilarating, for, without sacrificing an early friendship, they have contrived to become known as leading exponents of widely separated poetry doctrines... For mentioning these gentlemen in this

connection, I receive 10 per cent of the gate receipts, in the event of an engagement resulting from my notice.

—
By some Napoleonic *coup d'état*, details of which are lacking, a split in the grand opera cabinet has been precipitated. Whatever the reason, the outcome is happy, for at the head of affairs, now, is Mary Garden, the first woman director in the history of the art. Herbert M. Johnson, who resigned, may be retained as business manager. Gino Marinuzzi, who resigned as artistic director, remains the leading conductor of the organization. But the general manager, as well as the bright and shining star of the singing corps, is Mary Garden. A victrola record of the row that preceded the turn-over would be worth listening to, one fancies.

—
A final word, which I shall extend to several words before spring: watch for Ben Hecht's novel, scheduled for spring publication by Putnam. I have seen not a single line of it, but I predict that it will be the great novel of the year, if of not of several years. I have been called a fool for believing in Ben Hecht, and I am about to make a number of persons eat their words.

VINCENT STARRETT.

A man becomes disillusioned with marriage; a woman only with her husband.

Unauthorized Authors

There's absolutely no use struggling to become a successful young author. It simply can't be done. At boarding school there used to be a quaint folktale in circulation of a girl who papered her room entirely with love-letters. Letters containing proposals formed the border.

Some of us suspected the situation had been lifted from *I, Mary McLane*, but, be that as it may, there are lots of people with grief like a knife in their hearts who could paper Washington Artillery Hall with rejection slips.

And do you know why? It's the advertisements.

Read them—and weep, brothers and sisters of the burning quill. What chance is there for you?

Nemesis has crept gradually on us from behind and then leaped on our necks. When they began winding up stories among the ads the authors murmured a little among themselves but let it go at that. When the advertising sections of magazines grew three times as thick as the rest, there was the first flicker of fear among the writing ranks. But the full calamity crashed upon us suddenly.

Do you think the public is going to bother chasing to a conclusion a tortured offering of fiction, chopped into mincemeat by a dozen (Continued on Page 9852)'s when it can turn to the advertising section and make its choice of adventure, philosophy, romance—aye, even poetry, all served up with

art of the utmost magnificence and finished on one page?

For instance—

At the top of a page, a Boticelli woman *drees her weird* at a casement that overlooks a dusky garden. It is an artistic thing that could be used with perfect taste to illustrate "Marianna in the Moated Grange."

"She never knew how close to happiness she came," tactfully whispers a repressed headline. And with delicate sympathy the type goes on to tell you how love's gossamer wings hovered just for a moment over that bent head, then flew away. In the last line a confidential postscript informs you why her knight rode on to Camelot. It was because she did not use Onotatall Toilet Water.

Right on the next page, if you prefer a happy ending, under a McMein painting entitled "The Kiss" that every flapper from Frisco to Maine will cut out and passepapout, a pean of joy will burble forth:

"Peggy, my dear, to think that I am here in Paris, with this precious gold ring on my finger—and Bob! And that last year I was so blue and lonely because I felt left out of everything and never had a good time.

"I suppose I should tell you of all the wonders of Paris and beautiful France, but I happened to meet Mildred Livingston on the street yesterday and she tells me you still suffer with freckles as you used to.

"My dear, you remember at school

how my freckles were really worse than yours, and I, like you, was so sensitive and never went out or enjoyed myself.

—“They have been gone now, for—let me see, about ten months—yes, just that, for it was then I met Bob, you know, and he says it was my lovely complexion that first interested him in me.

“So, Peggy dear, do buy a box of Fadeout Freckle Cream and be as happy as

“Your loving Imogene.”

Would you have the problem play and eternal triangle stuff? Read how the brave little mother of triplets won back her husband's wandering love, captivated the president of the firm, got the big promotion for John and broke the family triumphantly into the 400. It was a simple matter after she had taken a course by mail with the Home Dressmaking School and found how to dress up to her type on \$2 a week.

For good, solid, home and fireside reading, here is the personal story of the young shipping clerk who bought the little suburban bungalow and married Daisy five weeks after he ordered the book called *Memory Training*.

Even the youngsters are deserting the Henty Books for accounts of Wilmer Hughes of Minneapolis (insert photograph) who worked his way through high school and college and sent his mother to a health resort by selling *Ladies' Home Journals*.

So, there you are.

Personally, I am resigned to our fate, and, after taking this means of easing my humiliated soul, I shall just lay away my typewriter in lavender and become a literary nun.

DORIS KENT.

THE AMERICAN LANGUAGE (WITH DUE RESPECT TO H. L. M.)

One by one, the scholars come to learn the Puritan tongue.

Sit down on hard benches manufactured by right-minded people.

The right angles of the benches, sculptured self-portraits of right-angled wills...

Whose chins sway forty-odd states and who knows how many territories.

Whose jaws rule round backs straight. Backs that might have grown thoughtless from too much sitting under trees.

Once crooked, aimless trees that have themselves been hewn down and planed level.

Elms of New England, oaks of the Middle West, eucalypti of California.

Their heads prone to escape rooted grooves at the whim of a breeze or two.

One by one, professors rise to lines as rigid as pencils.

Knock down school walls, you will find all the pencils vertical parallels.

All the scholars right-angle-triangle parallels.

All the tongues, gliding out of and back into mouths, horizontal parallels.

Everybody, everything, right-angled Puritan parallels.

Acute, if there be any such, and obtuse, firmly converted.

Acute minds blunted, obtuse minds sharpened.

Lowered or raised to the balance of the ideal equal.

The right mind triumphant.

The thirteen parallel pioneer stripes, justified and multiplied.

ALFRED KREYMBORG.

Reviews of Books

COLLECTED POEMS OF WALTER DE LA MARE (HOLT, 1920.)

"Three jolly gentlemen
In coats of red,
Rode their horses
Up to bed.

"Three jolly gentlemen
Snored till morn,
Their horses champing
The golden corn"—

So begins "The Huntsmen" in "Peacock Pie," and "The Huntsmen" and "The Horseman" and "Poor Jim Jay" and a hundred other of the nursery songs of Mr. De la Mare are such enchanting melody or whimsy that many of us are in danger of thinking of him as simply a child-balladist. It is an amiable injustice on our part, but a serious one.

It is, of course, true that if Mr. De la Mare were a writer only of the children's verse he has given us, he would be at the top of a ladder, his child-rhymes being so far superior to those of others that comparison is quite impossible. The author of "Grill me some bones, said the Cobbler," "Do diddle di do, Poor Jim Jay," "Some one came knocking at my wee small door," and "I have heard a lady this night, Lissome and jip and slim," with a picture-book imagination which leads him to such lines as

"Bakers' are warm, cobblers' dark,
Chemists' burn watery lights,"

and

"I saw three witches
That bowed down like barley,"

is without competitors.

Mr. De la Mare, however, is more than our best child-balladist. He is one of the very best poets England has ever produced. It was seven or eight years ago, when Walter De la Mare was hardly a name among the generality of readers, that Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer declared that, in his opinion, no more beautiful poem had been printed in years than the "Epitaph" in "The Listeners."

It is a poem which has been treasured by many, and Mr. De la Mare has since added to it a handful more of beautiful poems which defy criticism—songs which are not more likely to die than was "Weep ye no more, sad fountains" four hundred years ago.

The collected poems of Walter De la Mare, as they are now to be had, include "Songs of Childhood," "Peacock Pie," "Poems—1906," "The 'Listeners'" and "Motley." It is possible that these collected poems will somewhat weary the hirsute. The mannerism which repeats the terms "sweet" and "gentle" in all connections is not consistently pleasing and is, perhaps, to poseurs in virility downright objectionable. Mr. De la Mare, too, is not very deeply concerned about liberty, equality and fraternity, nor very much—if at all—disturbed by

the current political alarms and dis-
cussions which cause such a jabbering
on our own Parnassus. He writes poe-
try, as poetry ought to be written, for
pleasure, and it is his pleasure to make
quiet songs. He offers no chants royal.
He does not belabour a kettle-drum. He
is, in no sense of the word, a thunder-
shaker.

But, at his best, Walter De la Mare
uses language as few men have used it
in England since Thomas Campion was
a doctor, and he gives us—out of his
own imagination—a pure and other-
worldly beauty that is unlike anything
else in our literature—a peculiarly
witching beauty that is quite new. He
casts over common objects a queer illu-
mination that is half goblin-moonlight
and half twilight. His cadences are,
to a lover of music in words, a contin-
ual source of delight. They are new
and strange, startling, completely his
own. Take this from “The Listeners”:

“Is there anybody there?” said the Traveler,
Knocking on the moonlit door;
And his horse in the silence champed the
grasses
Of the forest’s ferny floor:
And a bird flew up out of the turret,
Above the Traveler’s head:
And he smote upon the door again a second
time;
“Is there anybody there?” he said.”

Or this, from “Alexander”:
“Voices of sea-maids singing
Wandered across the deep:
The sailors labouring on their oars
Rowed, as in sleep.”

The atmosphere of dream and mys-
tery and beauty with which Walter De
la Mare suffuses everything he cares
to touch, by means of this complete
mastery of cadence and his remarkable

aptitude for elfin imagery and epithet,
is a contribution to the moods of litera-
ture. Look at these stanzas from
“Martha”:

“Once... once upon a time...”
Over and over again,
Martha would tell us her stories,
In the hazel glen.

“Hers were those clear grey eyes
You watch, and the story seems
Told by their beautifulness
Tranquil as dreams...”

“Her voice and her narrow chin,
Her grave small lovely head,
Seemed half the meaning
Of the words she said.”

“Once... once upon a time...”
Like a dream you dream in the night,
Fairies and gnomes stole out.
In the leaf-green light.”

Or this, from “The Song of the Mad
Prince”:

“Who said, ‘Ay, mum’s the word’;
Sexton to willow:
Who said, ‘Greek dusk for dreams,
Moss for a pillow’?
Who said, ‘All Time’s delight
Hath she for narrow bed;
Life’s troubled bubble broken’?—
That’s what I said.”

One could quote for a long while from
Walter De la Mare—culling, at that, but
a few of the lines and stanzas and
phrases, alive with beauty or mystery,
which are scattered richly throughout
his work. But neither space nor good
taste will allow one to pilfer at will.

I have no particular contention to
make. I admit that there are many
men now writing in more astounding
terms than Walter de la Mare—men

producing a greater volume of verse—men selecting more grandiose themes—better democrats—lustier ballyhoos—men with more hair on their rhymes. There are men with louder voices, but I believe there are none—not even excepting Yeats and Masefield—whose voice will carry farther, for Walter De la Mare has already produced a sufficient number of beautiful poems and songs to entitle him safely to that relative immortality which is sometimes conferred by the arts.

The author of "The Listeners," "An Epitaph," "Moonlight," "Napoleon," "Ages and Ages Ago"—strangely omitted from his collected poems—"The Song of the Secret," "The Song of the Mad Prince" and "The Song of Shadows," will be a long time dying.

J. M.

WILL A CATHER'S YOUTH AND THE BRIGHT MEDUSA

(ALFRED A. KNOPF, 1920.)

TO one who has the inner understanding of that humor and sadness which go to make up life, style in literature becomes less a matter of outward grace, than of inward beauty. A conception of truth molds a form. The Greek vase-makers did not always get their sides to balance, but when this was done mechanically, it ceased to be art. In the recent volume of short stories, "Youth and the Bright Medusa," by Willa Cather, truth has been attained with simplicity. The balance matters not so much to her as the thing she wishes to express and there is carried, even to the common-place appreciation, the freshness of feeling,

the poignant realization of a new unsullied power.

Usually one feels the boundaries of a short story, partially concealed. Dots do quite a bit to create space and the snappy ending cuts contemplation short. But in this delighting volume, there are no tricks of trade, nor concession to any sort of dear Reader. Life flows beneath the eye, unhurried in telling, with every closeness of detail and vision of perspective. Atmosphere is captured with a living breath and color. One is scarcely surprised that her slender output—very slender as compared to our foremost and most joyous magazine contributors—is this result of a year or so to a book. Mr. Mencken rightly finds this the most encouraging hope for American letters in general.

Perhaps, in its larger truth, "Coming, Aphrodite!" seems the finest story of the group. It is that of two people, each with an art. The woman wins success with her hard ideal of it. Her very desires are utilized to an end—and in the end, so lightly touched upon, her name blazons in electric lights. The man wins by being, as you would say—original. He advances with his art. He works always for truth, to make the way. He is heard of later, a word now and then, as a prophet for the young. And between the epoch of Washington Square studio and their divergent goals, these two have their moment of "the perfume and passion of youth." The marvel is how into the calyx of this episode, is drawn all the truth of these two alien factors in art; the one who understands his own soul and the other who has none to question.

Willa Cather's humor is that comprehensive one of a great heart. And after all, is it not great-heartedness

that makes genius? "The Diamond Mine" and "The Sculptor's Funeral" are written with a perception that contents itself to find the irony of facts sufficiently droll. Both strike the note of the tragic humor in the Every Day. In "The Diamond Mine," the family "genius" is fed upon by family parasites. They are the burden of courage and an art so driven to meet their demands, as to miss its own greatness. Cressida's family have "the Garnet Look", which "though based upon a strong family resemblance, was nothing more than the restless preoccupied expression of an inflamed sense of importance." Her very loves feed upon her profits to the hour of a death laid at the door of advertising.— Oh, my countrymen, what abstract truths in personal history!

"A Gold Slipper" is a delicious fling. Kitty Ayshire impales the tribe of Wingless Mind, they "who go deep, but never go high." "You don't give me any good reasons," she tells McKann. "Your morality seems to me the compromise of cowardice, apologetic and sneaking. When righteousness becomes alive, you hate it as much as you do beauty. You want a little of each in your life, perhaps, adulterated, sterilized with the sting taken out".... "McKann hated tall talk."

There is a mission in all this, if the word is not too deadly. From her first writings Willa Cather has shown her belief that writing must be awakening as well as entertainment. Brief form is to her all the surer urge for conveying vision. "Paul's Case," one of her earliest stories, shows this very clearly. The tragic demand of a boy's nature through damnable surroundings, is traced with merciful analysis. Such demands—and who shall plumb their

cravings?—bring Youth to Death. In "A Wagner Matinee"—and this the sulphitic reader will relish as a Scriabine prelude—the same living idealism is at work to arouse the faint or mislead spirit—"It never really died then, the soul which can suffer so excruciatingly and so interminably; it withers to the outward eye only, like that strange moss which can lie on a dusty shelf half a century and yet, if placed in water, grows green again."

Such a lyric touch as this rouses the "tears of divine despair." Here is a clearer ideal for the short story. Only a writer will know what lucid concentration that ideal demands.

To pass on the inner understanding that upholds the arts and does not overlook the gentleman in the lavender striped shirt sleeves (with the ladies' permission)—is indeed achievement in literature. To some "Youth and the Bright Medusa" will be a thorn in the side of a righteous man, even as Kitty Ayshire's slipper, but to others who know the heights and depths of life, a treasure akin to that which must be fed on in the heart with thankfulness.

F. F.

PAUL ELDRIDGE—VANITAS

(*THE STRATFORD CO., 1920.*)

VANITAS," the volume of poems by Paul Eldridge issued in the summer of this year by the Stratford Company, introduces a poet who, for his queer and often powerful faculty of imagery, is worthy of wide and honorable recognition, but who, from his general pessimism, style of expression, and obsession with ideas rather than emotions, precision rather

than popular appeal, is but too likely to have difficulty in reaching an audience. It is not probable that the American democracy will devour several printings of "Vanitas." And yet the man who can pen such lines as these,

"My thoughts are timorous mice
Gnawing at Illusions,
Afraid of Truth,
The grey-eyed Cat."

and these

"The Moon,
The painted mountebank
Of the infinite circus,
Grins and bows
To his celestial audience.

"The Ocean,
A clumsy bear,
Sways and dances
To the bagpipes
Of the merry winds."

—the man who can pen such lines as those deserves applause and congratulation. That queer adeptness at imagery is rare.

I am not attempting to say that "Vanitas" is a great book. When a great book of poetry appears in America the gates will lift up their heads and sing. One of these days the collected poems of Edwin Arlington Robinson or David Morton may turn the trick, but the day is not yet. One of these days Paul Eldridge himself may turn the trick, but he has not done it here.

"Vanitas" is an exhilarating personal expression of a sincere and conscientious artist in language. It is a book with much strength and beauty in it—not consistent strength and not consistent beauty, but much of both. It reveals a man—a devil of a pessimist, but an excellent artist—with a busy and

fertile brain, a clever hand, a lively fancy, and an ideal of beauty. He has seen things, here and there, that nobody in the world but himself could have seen, and told them to us in precise and beautiful language. He has a queer intellectual eye for images that makes him a very isolated member of the American Parnassus. There is a queer beauty and a queer strength about his best conceptions that make him lonely. And it is the queer beauty or originality of his images which makes his work exhilarating to the reader of general contemporary verse.

Paul Eldridge writes almost exclusively in free rhythms and without rhyme. The absence of melodic effects forces him to rely, for success, upon the strength of his conceptions, for, as is the case with all writers of *vers libre*, it is quite seldom he attains rare beauty of sound, which in *vers libre* is the most difficult thing in the world. But his imagery carries him high.

"Vanitas" is a volume of pessimism. There is much irony and a certain amount of pity in Paul Eldridge's portrayal of himself and the world. But, pitiful or ironical, he is always pessimistic. He is obsessed with death and decay and the "transitoriness of these vain things under the moon." He has not much admiration or encouragement for—as he calls him in one place—"Man, the Cock of the World." He sees no particular hope ahead for either the Cock or the World. But he is quite full of lively and pleasurable fancies and hardly as soul-sick as one might expect, for so ardent a nihilist. With Anatole France, he calls upon Irony and Pity as the appropriate witnesses and judges of mankind. And he amuses himself with fancies and embroideries

upon the theme of the world, though—or because—there is a doom upon it.

I quote “The Black Cat,” a queer and surprising conception:

“The Mice,
The Inhabitants of the Earth,
The cosmic Cellar,
Are gnawing clamorously,
And disturb
The sleeping of the Stars—
The Ancient Guardian
Swings his lantern—The Moon—
As he descends
The mouldy steps
Of Infinity,—
While the Black Cat
Under his arm
Meaws—meaws—”

There is a sardonic fable for you, matched by nothing in recent literature. It is queer. But it is immense.

And here is a small bit of irony that is quite pleasing:

THE LAKELET MEDITATES.

“I am the eternal Heavens,
And the stars and the sun lie upon me
More softly than the sudden dipping
Of a swallow’s wing—
And above, in Infinite Space,
An azure toy-mirror
Reflects me forever . . .”

And here is a piece of ghoulery that is quite diabolical, but strong enough to abide and stand in spite of a thousand fore-runners in the same eternal theme which cannot make it trite:

ILLUSION

“Life was a weary trudging
Through sticky mud—
I yearned for Death,
The golden wind,
The ceaseless merger of things—
I thought I’d join the cosmos
In her rapturous career,
Dance cotillions with the stars,
Kiss the red lips of moons,
Scatter voluptuous perfumes
From a rose’s chalice . . .”

“Are the cracks in this mouldy wood
The dancing stars?
Are these scarlet worms
Crawling, heavily,
Like pregnant things
Upon my teeth,
The lips of moons?
Is my coffin the cosmos,
In her rapturous career?
Is there a cosmos?

“Death is as futile as Life!”

Paul Eldridge is certainly a pessimist. Two-thirds of the poems in “Vanitas” are in very much this same strain. It is the pessimism commonly encountered in youth. But it is not, with Paul Eldridge, the pessimism of poetic youth, mourning its mortality. It is a set and established philosophy. He is quite sure that the world is vain, and that life is vain, and I believe he feels that it matters somewhat that they are vain. Pessimism, however, is as good a field for the artist to grow his cabbages in, as optimism. Paul Eldridge has produced, out of negation and nihilism, some startling and handsome poems. We should thank him for them.

And if Art is Play, as is so often

maintained, Paul Eldridge is also an artist in playfulness as well as in philosophical diablerie. Perhaps it is in his playful embroidering of fanciful themes that he will do his best work in the future. Some of the best work in "Vanitas" is playful stuff. "The Moon and the Ocean" is playful. And it is when he begins to fabricate images that he shows what a strange and original mind he has. He is different from anyone else in America certainly, though he may have cousins in France.

In "Opinion: *What Are the Stars?*" the Wolf says:

"The stars are shepherds' eyes
Watching over flocks—
But our feet
Fall more softly
Than shadows of lambs."

In "My Hopes" he writes:

"My hopes are gay-painted moths,
Voluptuous clowns,
Fluttering to delirious music—
But the red-eyed flame
Whistles and laughs—
Whistles and laughs..."

In "My thoughts" he writes:

"My thoughts are tremulous echoes
Of far-off drums
The stars are beating on
With silver rays."

And Paul Eldridge can write a giddy and rapturous line with the best of them:

"Life sings like a drunken bird,
But I sit at the window and dream—"

and, in "The Singer":

"She sings to us
Of lads and lassies kissing,

Of flowers, trees, and eternal pledges,
Of sun, and stars, and the roguish moons."

I am not trying to tell anyone that Paul Eldridge has proved himself a great poet, or that he has produced in "Vanitas" a great book. I believe, however, that America has now in Paul Eldridge a genius as queer and original and as portentous for beauty and charm, as was promised to us a quarter of a century ago in "The Black Riders." That is a great deal to say for any man, but I trust it is not too much.

K. N.

THE IMPERIAL ORGY

(*BONI & LIVERIGHT, 1920.*)

Some day some savant is going to compile—as final and conclusive proof of man's superiority to the monkeys—a work on the Ingenuities of Human Cruelty. It is a neglected branch of the literature of homo-worship. I believe nobody has yet seriously attempted it. Perhaps because of the immensity of the undertaking. A mere catalogue of the devices of cruelty invented by the little brother of the angels (with no description of their effect) would cover a parchment longer than the wall of China. Some day, however, some savant will attempt it. When he does he will find a great mass of data in Mr. Saltus' "Imperial Orgy."

In sketching the history of the tsars "from first to last," Mr. Saltus has, with as consistent an eye to theatrical effect as a Sunday-feature writer, made the most of cruelty and the devices of cruelty. You can hardly open the volume at random without finding a new one. Largely this is the fault of the

tsars, who did carry refinements in cruelty almost as far as the Chinese. But it is party Mr. Saltus'. One feels that he has overworked the dramatic appeal of horror. One grows to feel that he needs to rely, for power, on his subject matter—"Others, tied in sacks were trampled by maddened horses"—instead of on his pen. There is, throughout the book, a strained and wearisome struggle for the theatrical and the dramatic, which is thoroughly irritating.

Taking supreme instances of cruelty, of horror, of pomp, of lust, in a quickly moving pageant (a pageant, really, at a gallop) from the first tsar to the last, Mr. Saltus attempts to couple consistently the supreme in subject-matter with the supreme in expression. He endeavors to get into every word, every phrase, the maximum impact. He attempts to bludgeon you to your knees

with an ultimate word, an ultimate phrase, in every sentence. Since Mr. Saltus is, after all, not in this book a "lord of language," he fails. In general, he merely irritates with his countless dramatic gestures and attitudes. His book is a "penny-dreadful"—a "Sunday-supplement" to history. And his style—nervous, insistent, staccato—is consistently annoying. He screams loud enough, but his voice cracks: yet from the first page to the last he never lowers his voice. He accordingly deafens and grates when he would astound.

"The Imperial Orgy" is full of curious and fascinating gossip—it sketches, sometimes powerfully, but more often falsely and theatrically, much that is horrible and much that is gorgeous. If Mr. Saltus would not shout in one's ear, one would enjoy it: because of its subject matter, it is interesting.

X.

THE PROFESSIONS

LAW: Justice—bound in calf.

MEDICINE: A ballyhoo man in a Mortuary Chapel.

JOURNALISM: Michelangelo painting a house.

MINISTRY: The Song of Songs on a Victrola—God holding office hours.

THE ARMY: Little girls "playing ladies"—Octogenarians spinning tops.

POLITICS: Socrates playing the stock market—Simon Legree joshing the slaves.

INHIBITION

O farther than the farthest Pleiades,
Than fabled death in youth's long dream of life,
Your nearness is a slow and torturing knife,
Ribboned with secret smiles and ecstasies.
Yours not the fault, when you are only you,
Child-like, and mute of malice; mine the blame—
Yet am I what I am, and take no shame
Loving where, cowardly, I dare not woo.
And for my dream, I pay the price of dreams,
Torment and doubt, and questionings, and fear...
Let me, I pray you then, continue near,
Kissed by the shadow, where the glory streams.
There is so much forbidden, Dear—and yet
One may still dream, and one may not forget.

EDGAR SAVAGE.

THE BUTTERFLIES

In a town in the West when a certain lady came to be on her deathbed, the chamber was assailed by butterflies. They swarmed in hundreds, through the windows and about the bed. When the windows were closed, they fluttered in clouds against the panes, shutting out the sun.

Man—from different angles: Wo m fodder; foetuses gone to seed; the larvae of angels; bob-tailed apes.

A new punishment for Tantalus—near beer.

Experienced women are like old shoes.

Comment

Dumbarton Grange,
Dumbarton, Va.

Indeed I think you have made a most interesting beginning with THE DOUBLE DEALER, and I shall look forward to the future numbers.

As for "frank criticism," I am too deeply and pleasurabley prejudiced —being human—by the things said about me in that first number to be an unbiased judge. I, very naturally, liked the whole thing, and send my compliments to The Editors.

JAMES BRANCH CABELL.

New York City.

Allow me to congratulate you on the first number of THE DOUBLE DEALER. Hope it springs a New South on us. Can't you stop our Dear Country from going to hell?

California and New York were the last of the Old Guard of Liberty. Enter New Orleans and THE DOUBLE DEALER!

BENJAMIN DE CASSERES.

New Orleans, La.

Your initial bow is quite clever, a miniature Smart Set, as it were, whose gifted editor you so justly extol in a number of places.

I agree with your friends, however, that a magazine name which requires such a lengthy and involved explanation as you have chosen, is somewhat awkward.

The material you have chosen for your first issue is up to snuff. Especially meritorious is the Chicago Corre-

spondent's letter. It is to be hoped that we will hear more from him, as he is palpably a Menckenite, and, therefore, clever.

The general typography is good, but by all means *get rid* promptly of that hand-lettered, sophomoric title device on the cover. It reminds the initiated of that famous local periodical, *Old Gold and Purple*. The latter remark is the only destructive criticism I have to offer, and I wish you success and prosperity.

WILLIAM H. SCHULTZ.

New Orleans, La.

Congratulations!

I was a scoffer, but am repentant.

Vol. 1, No. 1, has both brains and art. It is easy to look through, and certainly easy to look at. How an aggregation of amateurs (pardon) could engineer a thing as good is the Eighth Wonder, the sub-wonder being that the contributions of the home talent go better than the high-priced imported stuff.

I like your editorials, your book reviews and your longest poem, in which the Poet of the Quartier gets all the color of the *libre* stuff without working nearly as hard as the Amy Lowell Legion.

Now that Opus 1 has (with some restraint visible between the lines) quite safely and properly established you as a legitimate institution, your friends would like to see you break loose and throw a little red stuff in the eyes of us. You can be devilish without being dirty.

A SUBSCRIBER.

Poeme Pythagoricienne

There is snow five inches deep carpeting the roadway and the world. And people pass, coming and going upon the crunching snow, while I watch them out of the window. Like ghosts, they pass and re-pass in the wintry air. I puff an old pipe. After all, they are but symbols—like clouds and trees, parabolas and triangles.

I puff an old pipe and smile.

And somehow out of the fumes of my pipe, like reality itself, steals the ghost of an old sorrow. If I were not soberly wise, I should be broken under this sorrow. If I were not soberly wise, it would destroy me surely.

But I puff an old pipe and smile. After all, it is only a symbol—like a teapot or a quadratic equation, a door-knob or a triangle.

BURTON HARCOURT.

Caprice

Presently, when I am very dead,
And this, my body, rotted quite away,
A whimsy ghost will come to you and say
The many things in life I might have said
Of this and this and that, alack-a-day—

The tender, daring things I could not say,
What time my flesh and bones were habited,
This wanton sprite spun out upon your bed
Will whisper you, alas, alack-a-day—
Presently, when I am very dead.

SCARAMOUCHE.

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